- » Inside the paddock at the Classic TT
- » How to buy a peachy Honda 350 twin
- » 18 pages of projects, fixes and cunning

'The fastest bike there was'
Celebrating 50 years of Laverda Jota with the men who made it

Britain's biggest-selling classic magazine

Classic Bike

OCTOBER 2025
ISSUE #549 - £5.60

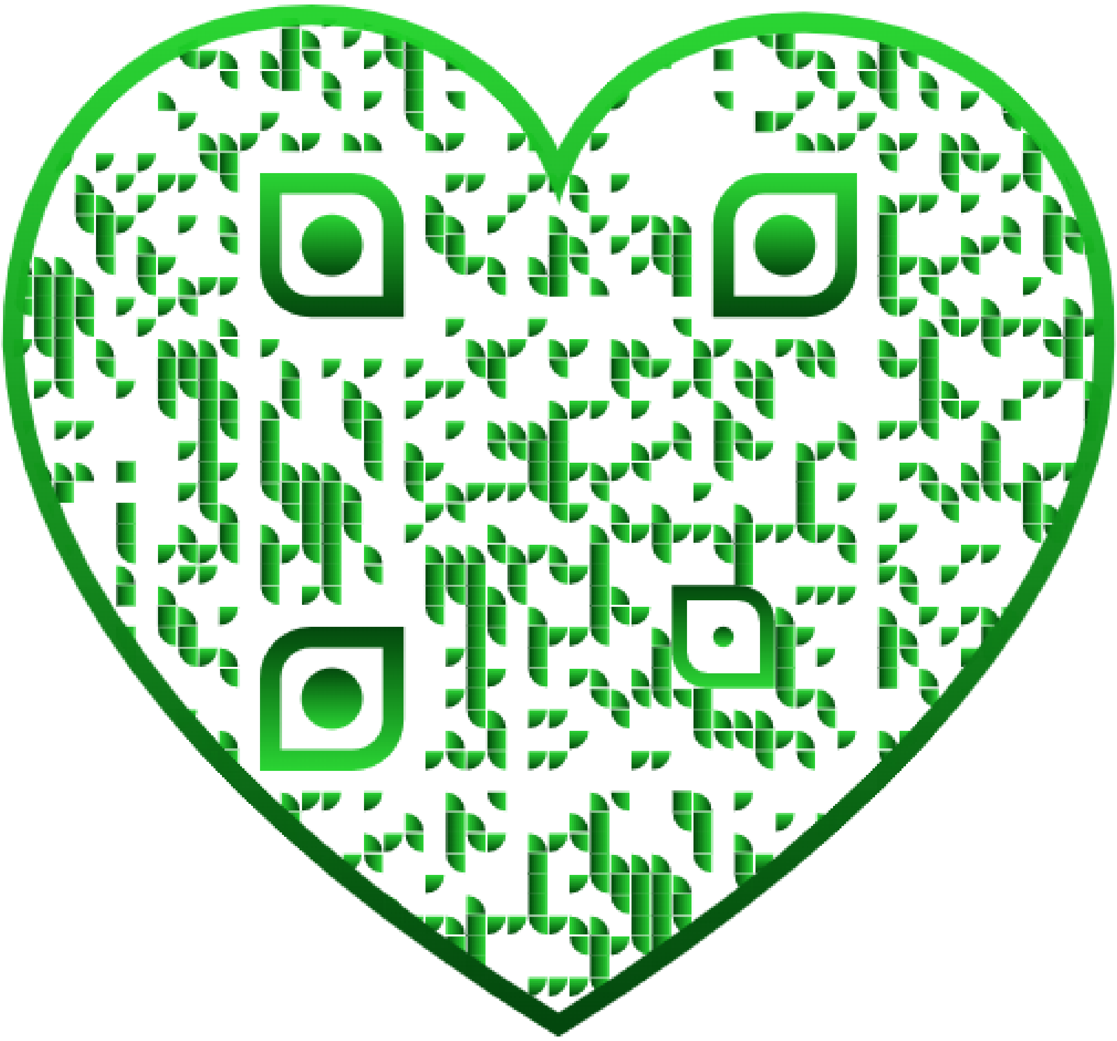
The very best of British

Commando with a shot of Vincent – the perfect cocktail

ON SALE SEPTEMBER 24 - OCTOBER 21

When Rick met Elsie
Our British bike expert lets rip on an RD350LC

'A gorilla beat me...'
Spills and silliness from the Weston beach race



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October 2025 / #549

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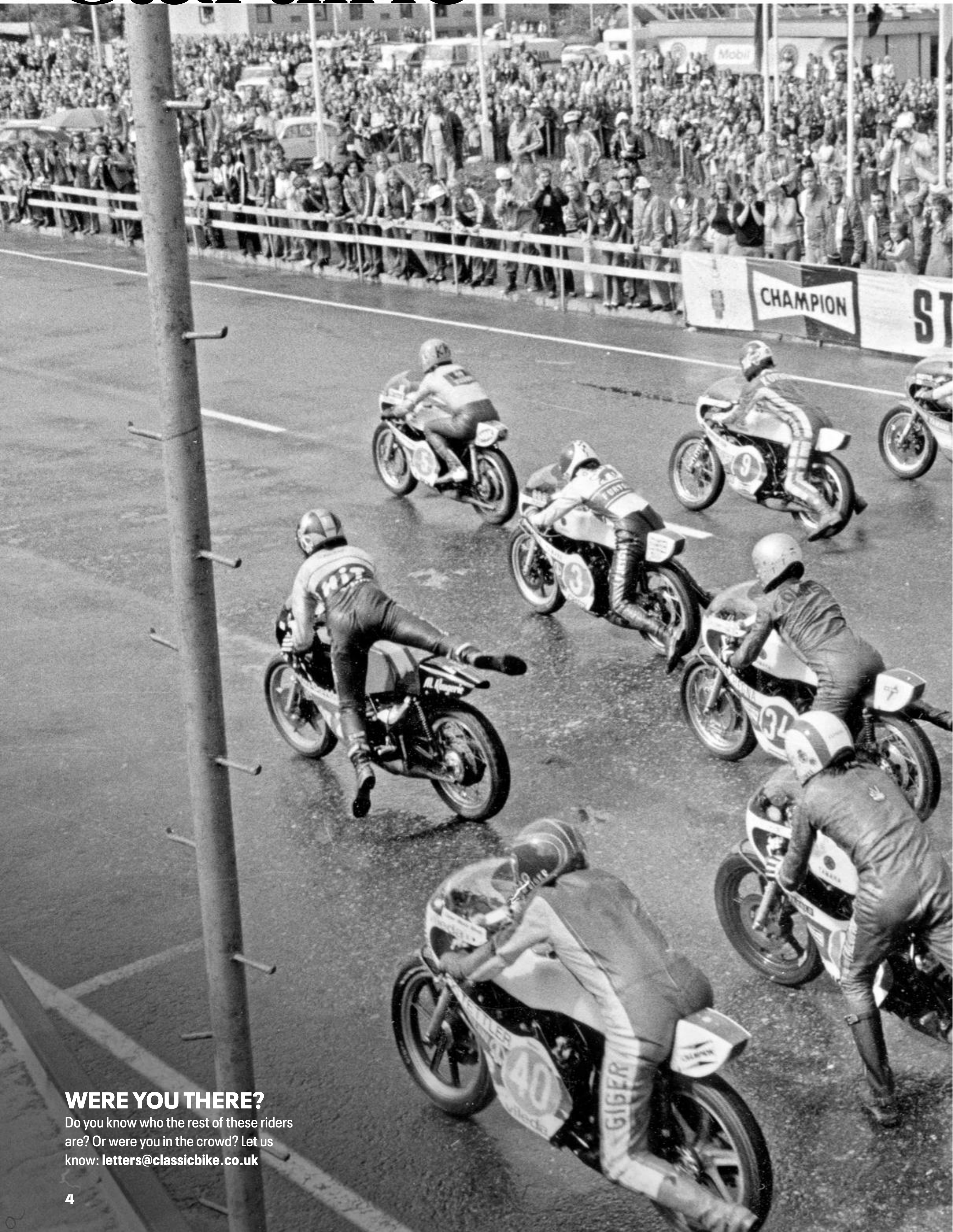
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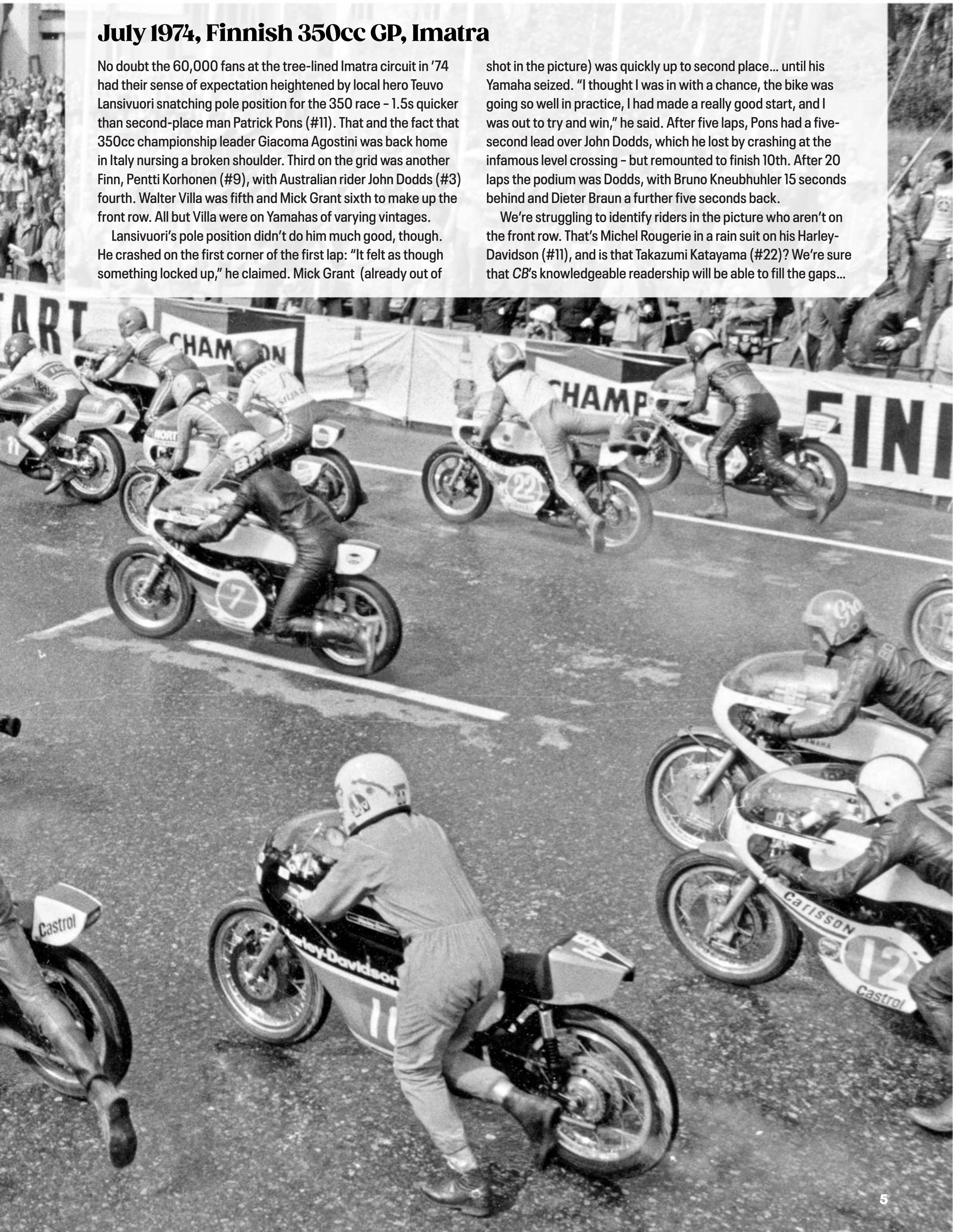
WERE YOU THERE?
Do you know who the rest of these riders are? Or were you in the crowd? Let us know: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

July 1974, Finnish 350cc GP, Imatra

No doubt the 60,000 fans at the tree-lined Imatra circuit in '74 had their sense of expectation heightened by local hero Teuvo Lansivuori snatching pole position for the 350 race – 1.5s quicker than second-place man Patrick Pons (#11). That and the fact that 350cc championship leader Giacoma Agostini was back home in Italy nursing a broken shoulder. Third on the grid was another Finn, Pentti Korhonen (#9), with Australian rider John Dodds (#3) fourth. Walter Villa was fifth and Mick Grant sixth to make up the front row. All but Villa were on Yamahas of varying vintages.

Lansivuori's pole position didn't do him much good, though. He crashed on the first corner of the first lap: "It felt as though something locked up," he claimed. Mick Grant (already out of shot in the picture) was quickly up to second place… until his Yamaha seized. "I thought I was in with a chance, the bike was going so well in practice, I had made a really good start, and I was out to try and win," he said. After five laps, Pons had a five-second lead over John Dodds, which he lost by crashing at the infamous level crossing – but remounted to finish 10th. After 20 laps the podium was Dodds, with Bruno Kneubhuhler 15 seconds behind and Dieter Braun a further five seconds back.

We're struggling to identify riders in the picture who aren't on the front row. That's Michel Rougerie in a rain suit on his Harley-Davidson (#11), and is that Takazumi Katayama (#22)? We're sure that *CB*'s knowledgeable readership will be able to fill the gaps…



BAUER ARCHIVE

Letters

letters@classicbike.co.uk facebook.com/classicbikemagazine classicbike.co.uk

Classic Bike, Media House, Peterborough Business Park, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, Cambs, PE2 6EA

Hello

A few weeks ago, my son Ed and I trundled to the monthly bike night at the Triumph factory. It was stuffed full of bikes and people, the sun was shining and we had a potter around the museum (sorry, I mean Factory Visitor Experience) and enjoyed an ice cream.

Obviously, lots of Meriden and Hinckley metal rolled up, but a rich variety of other bikes was in attendance. Some was new, yes - but there was a very healthy amount of classics (and plenty of retros). There were a few specials too, my favourite of which was a Yamagamma. I recall reading about Suzuki RG250 Gammas fitted with Yamaha RD350 engines in the '80s and early '90s, but can't remember the last time I actually saw one. This example was a 1983 MkI - the first mass-produced bike with an aluminium frame - and the discreetly-fitted YPVS motor had custom expansion-chamber pipes. It had an RGV250 front end and wheels as well.

Back when I was even more impressionable, carrying out engine swaps seemed entirely normal. At 16, the hot trick among my friends was to fit a H100 engine into a Honda MB-5. The cases were the same, so the larger unit slipped straight in (or only needed minimal fiddling). I remember standing with my mate Nathan at the local MoT station with his newly-finished bike (with ridiculous tune), while the tester poked around it and told us how he had to watch for scallywags fitting big engines. We looked at our feet. *CB* contributor Alex Innocent did a similar conversion, only his H100 unit was popped into an MTX50. With a home-made exhaust and Allspeed end can, it was nicked from outside Pro Porting, the tuning shop run by Harry Barlow in Leicester. He's still convinced his mum and dad made it 'disappear'...

Alex later blessed a Yamaha YZ125 motocrosser with a Kawasaki KX500 engine and used it on the road. He also once owned an RG250, although it escaped the attention of his spanners. He's on page 94 with his RD200DX project, which he's fixed using beer cans.

All this desire to meddle was nothing new, of course. Shoehorning in juicier engines is as old as motorcycling itself. The boom was the 1950s and '60s, with fuel tanks adorned with names like Tribsa, Triton and Norbsa - and the ultimate café racer, the Norvin. The mix of Featherbed Norton frame and Vincent V-twin engine is well known, but we're less familiar with a Norvin built around a Commando. Gerry Fry's bike on p28 is truly exquisite - and as far removed from the lashed-up bikes of my formative years as it's possible to get.

I hope you enjoy the issue.

Mike Armitage, Editor

Contributors in this issue

THE VERY BEST OF BRITISH

Gez Kane

Our market expert is also a dab hand at digging up exceptional builds and restorations. This month's Norvin is right up there.

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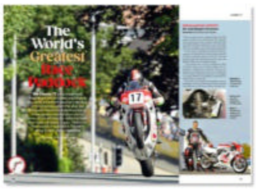


Jim Moore

Few journalists are as willing to wade in and ask questions as Jim. We sent him to unearth the finest bikes and greatest stories at the Classic TT.

Pages 36-43

The Slater Brothers

Andy Withers

The first Laverda Jota went on sale exactly 50 years ago. Andy went for lunch with the brothers responsible to get the story behind the icon.

Pages 50-56

Passive smoking

Great to see the photo of Pat Sefton and the mad TDRG500 in the latest issue of the mag (Extreme Smoking, September issue). I remember reading the story in the pages of the great *Performance Bikes* in the early '90s. Then I experienced the bike up close at the TT in '93 (probably). I was coming down the Mountain at a decent speed towards Kate's Cottage on two-way roads – and Pat passed me at probably 30mph quicker, using all the road while rounding Kate's. I still laugh at the memory now – and the trail of two-stroke smoke!

Guy Nightingale

Leave Frannies alone

Loved the article about Andy Tiernan's workshop in the September issue. Andy is a great guy and I love his down-to-earth approach. I've seen him on Henry Cole's *Motorbike Show* and I know Rick thinks highly of him. However, I felt I had to respond to Andy's comment about his first bike – 'it taught me to avoid Francis-Barnett Falcons' – and want to put a good word in for Francis-Barnetts.

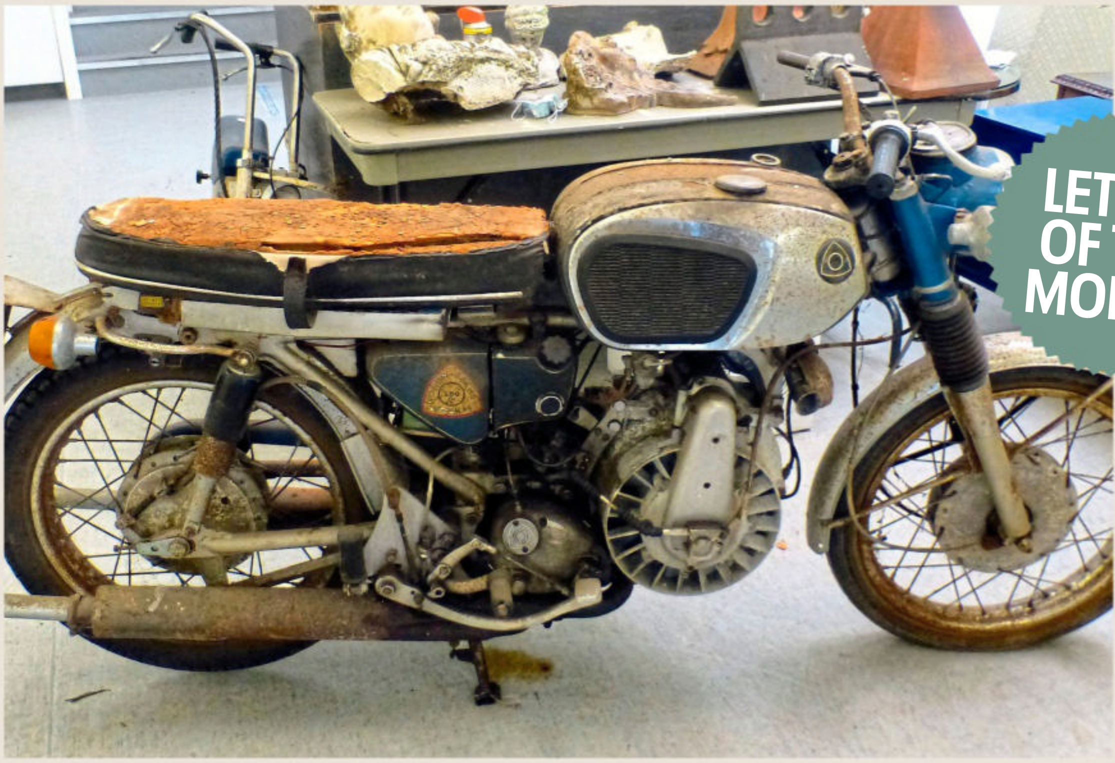
Let's face it, looking back to our first bike, we'd all have to confess that we contributed largely to many of the mishaps and breakdowns encountered – and honestly, we couldn't lay the blame on the manufacturer. In the last 10 years or so, I've covered quite a few miles on my 70-year-old Francis-Barnetts and have been surprised at their reliability. Last year I rode my Model 58 to the Normandy beaches, covering over 400 miles in the week before arriving home again in Northern Ireland.

Keith Livingstone, Co Armagh

A matter of gravity

In the 'Get your wheels in line' article in the workshop section of the September issue, Alan Seeley says: 'There are few straighter things than a laser beam'. But as you may know, gravity deflects light, so this device may not be entirely accurate on a Harley or Gold Wing...

Simon Hewitt



LETTER OF THE MONTH

Wankel gets hammered

The Honda Sachs Wankel that featured in your 'Extreme Smoking' article in the September issue of *Classic Bike* does indeed still exist. It recently emerged as a 'barn find' in a general sale at Amersham Auction Rooms on August 18. It was complete and intact, but in a very dilapidated state, as you can see above. It sold for £1800, which with the addition of buyer's premium is a total of £2232. The price achieved certainly raised a few eyebrows on the day. It was a bit of a mystery to most onlookers, with an uncertain history. It had no documents and clearly would require a full restoration to recover.

Even in this state of disrepair, what was immediately apparent was how well the bike had been assembled and detailed. The fit and finish was excellent - to the extent that it could easily have passed as a factory-built machine. Even the badges and decals were one-off specially-made items. Having never previously come across this machine, I assumed that it must have been the result of an official Honda/Sachs collaboration.

Even as a mere special, this machine deserves some recognition and its place in Wankel history. Van Veen with the OCR1000 and Suzuki with the RE5 had both gone down the superbike road and built machines that actually made it to the marketplace. Honda, on the other hand, were more cautious and only briefly flirted with the Wankel. They envisioned smaller, lighter machines, much like this Bob Monaghan special. Their own prototype was apparently created with a small single-rotor Wankel engine which was mated to CB125 crankcases and sat in a standard CB125 chassis. It bears a remarkable similarity (at least in concept) to Monaghan's machine.

Honda ultimately didn't proceed with the project. Monaghan, however, with a dated chassis and a Sachs engine, was clearly way ahead of them and actually built and ran this fantastic special.

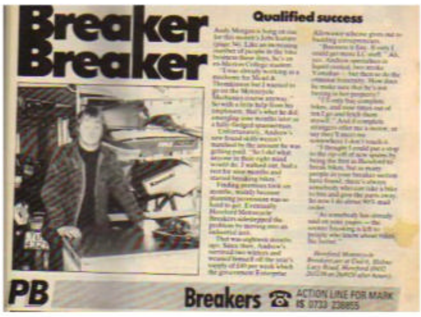
Nigel Timms, Marlow, Bucks

Honda Sachs Wankel special featured in *CB* was sold in August, requiring some attention. (Thanks to Amersham Auction Rooms for the photograph)

Breaking out

In response to your article 'The Breakers' in the August issue, I too made the pages of *Performance Bikes* back in the '80s when I was owner/proprietor of Hereford Motorcycle Breakers (see article from '87 on right). Obviously, since then everything has moved online in the breaking game; eBay has had a huge effect on the trade and most of the old names are long gone. But it's good to see a couple in your article still holding their own. You mentioned Buffalo Breakers and were unable to trace Andy Cale; I can confirm he's still spannering both bikes and cars in his retirement. I am often reminded of the bikes I stripped and the parts that no one wanted back then which are the hardest to find now, such as RD350LC airboxes and uncut rear mudguards – they often ended up in the skip back then.

Andy Morgan



Breaker Breaker

Qualified success

PB

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BAUER MEDIA

Former breaker Andy's moment of glory in *PB*

Inside the paddock at the Classic TT
How to buy a peachy Honda 350 twin
18 pages of projects, fixes and cunning
'The fastest bike there was'
Celebrating 50 years of Laverda Jota with the men who made it
Classic Bike
The very best of British
Commando with a shot of Vincent – the perfect cocktail
When Rick met Elsie
Our British bike expert lets rip on an RD350LC
'A gorilla beat me...'
Spills and silliness from the Weston beach race

COVER IMAGE: TIM KEETON

Issue #549 of *Classic Bike* was brought to you...

...to the sound of
M*A*S*H theme, No 1 when the RD350LC went on sale

...despite this distraction
YouTube, Highlights 2025 Lightweight Classic TT Race

.. with this refreshment
Bohem, brewed and served at the Queens Arms, Battersea

...and thanks to
Steam Packet ferries and the lovely folk on the Isle of Man

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JASON CRITCHELL

Reader Archie Frew appreciated last month's VFR750 cover bike, but suggested a slight correction...

Local breakdown

Living in the north-west, the two go-to breakers in our area back in the day were Blacks in Ormskirk and West Coast (affectionately known as Wet Toast) in Southport. Of the two, West Coast was the slicker operation – they even sold merchandise like hoodies and caps. Apart from spare parts, they also sold write-offs that we bought to be used as track bikes – a phenomenon that was booming in popularity at the time.

I also remember a regular meet up at a pub called The Tap in Eastham on the Wirral. Loads of bikers congregated there on a Sunday night for an impromptu show of wheelies, doughnuts and burnouts. I vividly remember a local youth doing a burnout on a GSX-R1100 streetfighter until the headers glowed cherry red.

A certain Gary Rothwell also used to rock up and blow everyone away – usually ending with a burst rear tyre and the bike being thrown in the back of a van. He was eventually sponsored by West Coast and Avon Tyres.

Mark Stubbs

PETER BAILLIE

Peter Baillie's beanie, with CB badge (bottom left)

Great but wrong date

I've just had the September issue of *CB* delivered – after a quick look, it's a good one. Nice to see a wee bit of modern – ie '70s/'80s – stuff. Paul Hawksworth's VFR750 looks good – Jim Moore is right when he says it's like the late Geoff Johnson's TT bike – the 6X Honda. A wee discrepancy crept in, though – it was in 1986 not 1987. The bike was a missile, as he finished second on it to Joey in the F1 race.

Archie Frew

Flagging up more riders

I think I can add a few names to the Mallory Post-TT International Startline shot in the July issue. From memory, number 8 is Stan Woods, 23 is Paul Smart, 38 is John Cowie, 19 is Martin Sharpe and I think 21 may be Cork Ballington. Hidden behind Roger Marshall is Dave Potter. But I would dispute number 25 as Charlie Williams – I think it's Bernard Fau. Charlie had a red helmet with 'CW' prominent. Steve Parrish is the one with the blue dot next to Smartie.

Chris Dodd

Beanie meanie

I promise this is my last missive on the subject, but check out the enamel *Classic Bike* badge on my 2003 IoM TT beanie (left). We need more of these – plus stickers and T-shirts, please. And yes, I seldom throw out anything from my past... but I'm not a hoarder, honest!

Good luck to Hugo and welcome (back) Mike. Keep up the good work.

Peter Baillie, Belfast

‘Nice to see a wee bit of modern – ie ’70s/’80s – stuff in *Classic Bike*’

Bonnie beats 916

I have to agree with Roger Papke (Letters, *CB* July issue) that a 1970 Bonneville is better looking than a 916. Despite my Mediterranean background (Maltese parents) I have never taken to anything Italian (although their food is fantastic). My favourite has to be a Z1 or an LC, but I’m biased – I’ve had an LC for years.

John Vassallo

Satisfaction guaranteed

I’ve been a subscriber for a few years now and really look forward to the mag dropping through my letterbox. The recent changes to the format have improved an already excellent magazine.

I was delighted to see the write-up on the Suzuki T500/GT500 on page 81 of the June issue, having recently acquired a 1976 GT version. The best part? Finding out I’d paid the bottom end of ‘good’ for what, in my eyes, is a very good example.

Andy Bassindale

DVLA deviousness

The letter (*CB* August) referring to the potential of massive tightening up on the registration of barn finds, restorations and altered classics has, in my opinion, one over-riding motive - greed!

If the DVLA can de-register old vehicles due to minor infringements or alterations, it gives them access to recover the registration numbers for onward sale on the open market, with owners being ‘farmed off’ with either Q-plates or ‘difficult numbers’.

Arthur Bayley

Perfecion is boring

Loved Rick Rides on the MZ ES175 in the September issue. Totally agree with Rick that the quest for perfection has killed motorcycle individuality.

Boris Reynolds

Send your letters to...

Share your opinions, stories, questions and memories by sending them to **letters@ classicbike.co.uk**

Classic Bike MAGAZINE NEEDS YOU...

Have you just bought a new project? Or have you finished a project, taken part in an event or just been for a ride? Do you have pictures of you or your friends from your biking past? Or can you identify the riders or a face in the crowd from the Startline image on page four? Please write and tell us

Startline

How many riders from the 1974 startline can you identify?

Letters

Want to start a conversation about bike values or commend good service?

Your classics

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CLASSIC WORLD

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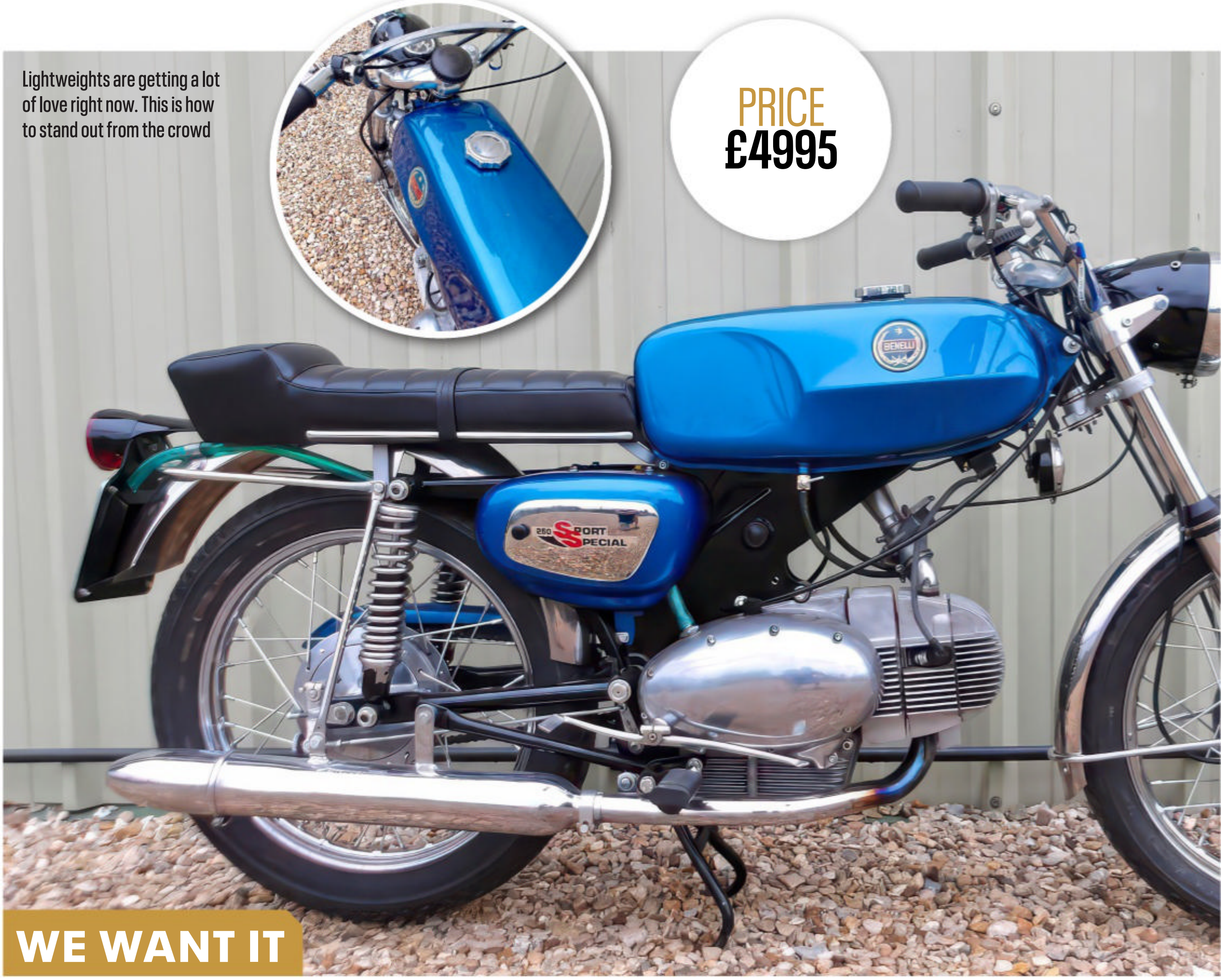
WORDS: MARK GRAHAM PHOTOGRAPHY: ROADHOUSE MOTORCYCLES



Lightweights are getting a lot of love right now. This is how to stand out from the crowd

PRICE £4995

WE WANT IT

Special in every sense

Chirpy, pretty and rare, yet also wondrously straightforward to ride and maintain, this **1972 Benelli 250 Sport Special** looks to us like just the ticket for a golden autumn

What goes around comes around – that's what people say. And the people, in this case, are correct. When Giuseppe Benelli fell out with his five brothers in 1948, he launched the Moto B company, making a 200cc horizontal two-stroke single. His offshoot was still in Pesaro, on the Adriatic coast, where Benelli was based. Must have been a seismic disagreement, even by Italian standards; squabbling one against all five siblings is full-on family aggro.

Those riders who favoured a stylish lightweight to get around on were the beneficiaries. The B200 was clean and modern. The ovoid outward form of the engine unit was pure, distinctive and would be carried forward into later laid-down four-stroke singles, the first of which was released in 1955. By 1962, Moto Bi (as it became) had re-merged with Benelli, and in 1971 the voracious Argentine industrialist Alessandro De Tomaso gobbled up Benelli (and acquired Moto Guzzi in 1973).

The roots of this 1972 250 Sport Special can be found in that 1955 'Power Egg' engine. The cylinder dimensions reveal just how modern the design was. A bore and stroke of 74 x 57mm is commendably oversquare, making for an eager, revvy powerplant. The BSA/Triumph 250 of the time was an undersquare antique at 67 x 70mm. For a measure of just how radical the Benelli was, current Grand Prix Moto3 250s have a prescribed maximum bore of 81mm (with a 48.5mm stroke).

Weighing in at a feathery 108kg (238lb) and with a top speed of just less than 90mph, the lithe five-speed Benelli is plenty

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Transalp, Firebird & GPz

quick enough for fun and games. And even if it weren't, who could not be seduced by the candy blue paint and that tuck 'n' roll seat with a squared-off bum stop?

This rare item is up for £4995 at Roadhouse Motorcycles near Stamford, Lincs. An import from Italy, it shows just 17,000km on the odometer, and would appear to be bone stock – down to the vulnerable Silentium silencer and infinitely more durable stainless steel mudguards.

Almost as simple as a bicycle to maintain, 85 times more fun to ride, and with a back story that only rich Italian family life could conjure, this is one of the most appealing lightweight singles to hit the open market.

When the going rate for a far more run-of-the-mill BSA Starfire is around three grand, this is surely a ridiculously inviting option for the connoisseur.

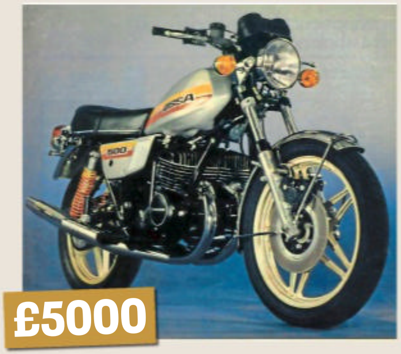
PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER

'If I had £10,000…'

Kawasaki's European PR Manager **Martin Lambert** owns two 250 S2s, a 750 H2A and a 500 H1B. Here's what else he'd buy with a theoretical £10k…

Ossa Yankee 500

"This bike intrigues me for several reasons. It was built in the fading shadows of General Franco's regime, so there's a political dimension to it. The subtlety of the fuel tank, side panels and production version colours are standout. And the fact that it was conceived as a 500cc twin motocross machine is something else. I pour my heart into my triples, but this would be something I could happily accommodate alongside them. On another note, it's a 500 – and I still struggle to get away from the idea of bikes as 300s, 600s and 800s. A 500 was 'big' – one step away from a 750, and what a 500 this was. I'm saying five grand… but I'd easily pay more when it's not my money."



£5000

Yvon Duhamel leathers

"Of all the Kawasaki riders of the 1970s, Yvon Duhamel was the man. A French-Canadian from Montreal, he rode bicycles, rode motocross, snowmobiles, the H2R, then the KR750 – and he was such an iconic figure. I grew up in Epsom, Surrey and the school playground backed onto a house where someone owned a King Cobra H2. I walked to school past another place where there was a Z1B, and Duhamel was the rider that caught my imagination at that time. He used two sizes of leathers – a big set for the snowmobile season, then another set for the road race season when he'd shed a bit of timber. I'm not saying what set I'd be after…"

£3000

Crowdfund a Rick Brett Kawasaki triples book

"I'm part of a group browbeating Rick into doing this. He's on the way now. It will be different to a John Brookes Kawasaki book. John's Z1 stuff is in rigorous detail, while Rick's will be anecdotal – more a patchwork quilt. But when someone's owned more than 1000 triples, there are plenty of stories to tell. Like ringing up eight random people in a Boston [Massachusetts, USA] phone booth to track down the only 250 S1 ever imported to the United States."

£2000

12 bikes you can buy

From the exotic to the prosaic, there's all manner of classic metal on the market. **Gez Kane** picks out some of this month's highlights for those on the hunt...

£5500-6500

1978 Kawasaki Z1000 A2

More affordable than the earlier Z1/Z900 models, this A2 is in excellent original condition and runs perfectly. A lowered seat and aftermarket brake calipers are fitted, but the originals are included in the sale.
charterhouse-bikes.com

£5995

1971 Honda Z50A K2

This one must be one of the best early Honda monkey bikes around. Restored by the previous owner as part of his collection, it's now road registered, in excellent running order and has had a recent service.
Dealer sale anthonygodin.co.uk

£1750

1994 BMW K75S

A very tidy and affordable example of BMW's 'flying brick'. Currently undergoing a full medical in the Classic Superbikes workshop, it's a UK market machine and comes with genuine BMW touring pack panniers.
Dealer sale classicsuperbikes.co.uk

£4500-6500

1969 Triumph TR6R Tiger

It's rare to find a Triumph twin in such original condition. Owned by former Triumph factory engineer Norman Hyde, it was discovered in California in 2012. Unused for 18 months, it will require careful preparation for the road.
bonhams.com

£3250

1977 Yamaha DT250MX

Just 8789 miles on the odometer of this popular two-stroke trailie – and given that the paintwork is in excellent original condition, that may well be genuine. New battery, chain and sprockets, and electronic ignition fitted.
Private sale 07414 289472

£1800-2200

1952 BSA Bantam D1

Delightful plunger-framed machine in Mist Green looks to be in excellent order as well as very original condition. An earlier restoration from a deceased estate, little is known about its previous history, but it looks ready to go.
charterhouse-bikes.com

£3500

1999 Aprilia RSV1000

A modern classic, going up in value, and better value than to a Ducati 996. Owned by the seller for 19 years and has just been recommissioned after seven years of non-use. Light cosmetic damage one side.
Private sale 07748 833770

£7250

1940 Velocette MDD MAC

This military Velo is a rare beast. It has been on display in a museum for a long time and will need a thorough going-over before use – but it has been cosmetically refurbished and looks in excellent original order.
Dealer sale andybuysbikes.com

£15,900

1980 Ducati MHR

This bike has been in one family ownership from new and is in superb original condition. It has been recently overhauled, including a new exhaust system with Conti silencers, a carburettor rebuild and fresh tyres.
Private sale 07947 648198

£800-1200

1995 Ducati 400SS

Possibly the most affordable of all Ducati V-twins, with fine handling albeit with modest performance. This Japanese-market machine has had some cosmetic work, but has not been run and will need sorting out before use.

bonhams.com

£4250-4500

1990 Bimota YB6 Bellaria

Not many Bimotas are designed as a genuine two-seater, and a mere 145 of these were built. This UK-registered Yamaha FZR600-engined bike is in excellent condition, with a genuine recorded mileage of only 41,000km.

charterhouse-bikes.com

£50,000-60,000

1955 Vincent Black Prince

A superb example of Philip Vincent's vision of the ultimate gentleman's motorcycle, this Series D was meticulously restored over several years at a cost of over £16,000. It has covered around 500 miles since then.

bonhams.com

Quick guide

Hesketh V1000

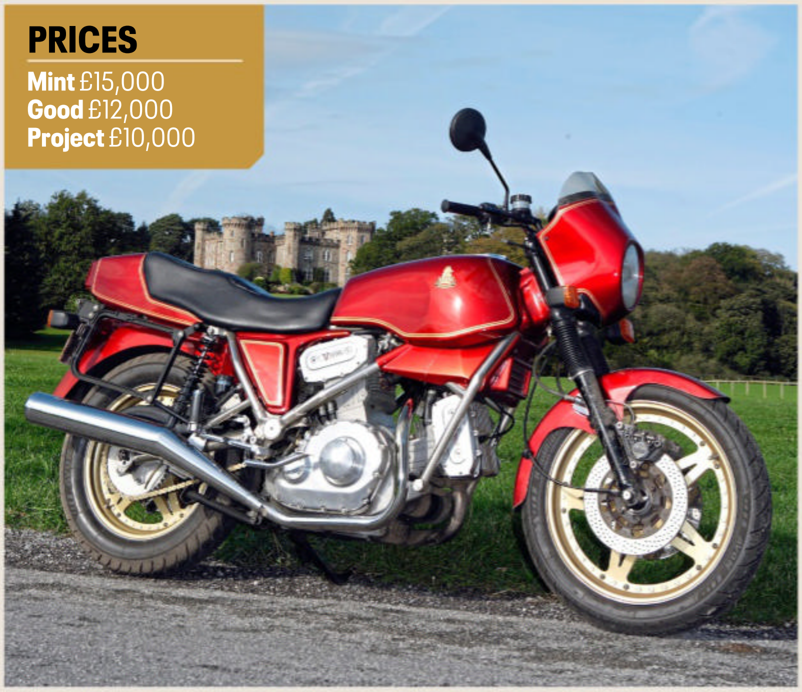
David Sharp is the Hesketh Owners Club's PR man. He's passionate about Lord Hesketh's vision of a thoroughly modern British V-twin motorcycle

Why it's desirable

The V1000 is rare, it's a fabulous looking bike and it's great to ride. You won't see too many others out on the road unless you're at a club event. The exclusivity of the marque is part of its appeal, without a doubt. But it's a high-quality machine in its own right too, with a Reynolds 531 chrome-moly frame, Astralite wheels and fully-floating Brembo disc brakes front and rear. A Brough Superior for the '80s, perhaps?

What to look for

There were a few issues with the V1000 when it first came out, principally with top-end lubrication. Factory engineer Mick Broom – who continued to support and develop the V1000 from 1984 until 2010 – developed a fix for the top-end lubrication issues, known as the E10 package, so look for a bike with the E10 mods. Check for easy starting. Poor carb set-up can cause damage to the starter clutch sprag if the engine backfires.



PRICES

Mint £15,000
Good £12,000
Project £10,000

SIMON HIPPERSON

How much to pay

Because there are so few bikes out there, simply finding one is the tricky thing. Most bikes are sold through the club, which is another good reason for becoming a member. A really top-class bike might cost around £15,000, but a good one will probably be around £12,000. Project bikes are virtually non-existent. Hesketh are not the sort of bike you find rusting away at the back of someone's garage.

Join the club

The club might only have around 100 members, but it punches above its weight. With only 200 bikes ever built, it represents around half of all Hesketh production. The knowledge base within the club is a vital resource, as since Mick Broom retired there's no trade support for the bikes. Lots of members have parts they're willing to sell, too. The social side of the club is pretty good – if you own a Hesketh, you really need to join.

12 bikes that sold

Gerard Kane guides you through the highlight machines from this month's sales – top bikes still get big money, but the tempting prices show it remains a buyer's market

£1735

1976 Honda XL125K

With the popularity of Japanese trail bikes on the up, this looks a fair price. It's fairly rare to see an XL125K in this condition - all original apart from rebuilt wheels with stainless spokes and alloy rims. Restored 10 years ago.

ebay.co.uk

£3100

1975 Triumph T150V

This US-market triple found its way back to the UK in 2017. It was recommissioned at that time and has been through three UK owners since then. In running order, the lot also included some handy spares.

spicersauctioneers.com

£2950

1989 Kawasaki KR-1

Kawasaki's 250cc two-stroke was the fastest of the breed - one tripped the *Performance Bikes* timing lights at 139mph. Mechanically good, but with 'presentable' paintwork, it has been in a private collection for some time.

ebay.co.uk

£3245

1978 Honda CB250N

The humble Superdream? A sought-after classic? Oh yes. This first-year example, which was in a private collection for some time, is in fine running order and has been fully restored to original condition.

manorparkclassic.com

£3695

1976 Suzuki GT250

Demand for '70s two-stroke 250s remains strong, as this very tidy Suzuki shows. Rides and runs well and looks in original condition, with just a few marks on some chromework. The frame has been powder coated, too.

ebay.co.uk

£11,200

1956 BSA DBD34 Gold Star

Prices have dipped a little of late, but this full Clubman-spec Goldie with correct RRT2 gearbox attracted a lot of interest and strong money. Fitted with a later engine, it's been on display at a BSA dealer for the past year.

brightwells.com

£3900

1976 Yamaha DT175

This example of Yamaha's popular trail bike made top money. The UK-market machine is in excellent condition and original, apart from a replacement seat cover. Used regularly, it is in good running order.

mathewsons.co.uk

£4500

1980 Triumph T140E

Prices for decent T140s have stabilised around £4000-5000 and this one looks a fair buy. The engine was rebuilt by the previous owner; the seller replaced the tank, rebuilt the wheels and fitted electronic ignition.

ebay.co.uk

£650

1970 Honda CL175

Honda's 175cc twin-cylinder street scrambler was never officially imported into the UK - but alongside other CL and SL twins (see p45), they've become popular here. A tidy, largely original example in running order.

spicersauctioneers.com

£4300

1990 Yamaha TDR250

Yamaha created the TDR250 after testing a TZR on dirt and a DT on tarmac, and merging their findings. The result was ahead of its time. This low-mileage machine looks in fine condition and the sale included some spares.
manorparkclassics.com

£3068

1991 MZ ETZ251

Another unusual 250 from Manor Park's recent sale, in sensational condition. Part of a private collection of MZs stored in the owner's house, it is totally original and has covered just 7091 miles from new.
manorparkclassics.com

£4200

1951 Norton 500T

Lovely example of Norton's rigid-framed trials machine, with its original registration mark returned. Bought by the vendor in 1989 and fully restored, it has been in dry storage ever since and will require recommissioning.
spicersauctioneers.com

Price check

Hinckley Triumphs

The early models from John Bloor's Hinckley factory put the Triumph name firmly back into the spotlight. And there are some glorious buys to be had

Bike	Description	Winning bid	Auctioneer
1998 Daytona 1200	One of 250 special edition SE models. Excellent	£4370	Iconic Auctioneers
1997 Daytona 900	From private collection, recommissioned, excellent	£2750	eBay
1994 Speed Triple	Professionally fitted with 1200 Daytona engine	£2650	eBay
1993 Trident 900	Reconditioned, exceptional, low mileage	£1850	eBay
1993 Daytona 900	Very good condition, service history	£1800	eBay
1997 Tiger 900	Modified/customised, tidy, runs well	£1550	eBay
1997 Daytona 1200	Totally original inline four, running well, tidy	£1440	eBay
1993 Daytona 750	Very good condition, mechanically sound	£1415	eBay
1993 Trident 900	Café racer project, almost finished	£1377	eBay
1993 Trophy 1200	Fair condition, recently serviced	£1000	eBay
1994 Daytona 900	Fairly tidy and original, no MoT	£950	eBay
1995 Sprint 900	Very good condition, ready to ride	£944	Manor Park Classics
1994 Sprint 900	Clean, original and low mileage	£860	eBay
1998 Sprint 900	Café racered, runs and rides	£770	eBay
1993 Trophy 900	Clean condition, upgraded brakes, long MoT	£780	eBay
1996 Sprint 900	Tidy, running project, needs fork seals	£620	eBay
1993 Trident 750	Dutch import, fair condition, runs well	£600	eBay
1995 Trophy 900	Running project bike, requires finishing	£550	eBay
1993 Trident 900	Low mileage, runs, some modifications	£500	eBay

'How much?' Gez Kane on classic values

Several of the Hinckley-built 1990s models are landmark machines. Yet the modular line-up seems to be going through the 'just an old bike' stage of its lives. This is fine by us - it means very usable machines selling for around £1500, with even the best rarely topping £3000.

The first Speed Triples are something of an exception to the trend, though. With few examples coming onto the market, you'll probably have to pay between £3000 and £4000 for a good one - if you can find one. And I can see prices rising further. If you fancy a naked Triumph, the best value bikes are the 750 and 900 Tridents. Very nice 900s are still under £2000, while £1500 gets you a tip-top 750. And you'll see usable examples of both for around a grand.

The *Classic Bike* auction diary

October 8-10
Mathewsons online classic car and motorcycle sale
mathewsons.co.uk

October 9
Charterhouse Classic and Vintage Motorcycle Sale, The Haynes International Motor Museum, Somerset
charterhouse-auction.com

October 11-12
Bonhams Autumn Stafford Sale, The Staffordshire County Showground
Bonhams.com

October 17
Manor Park Classics, Ikon House, Manor Park, Runcorn, Cheshire
manorparkclassics.com

October 29
H&H Auctions sale, The National Motorcycle Museum, Solihull
handh.co.uk

November 14
H J Pugh sale, Hazle Meadows Auction Centre, Ledbury
hjpugh.com

bikertek

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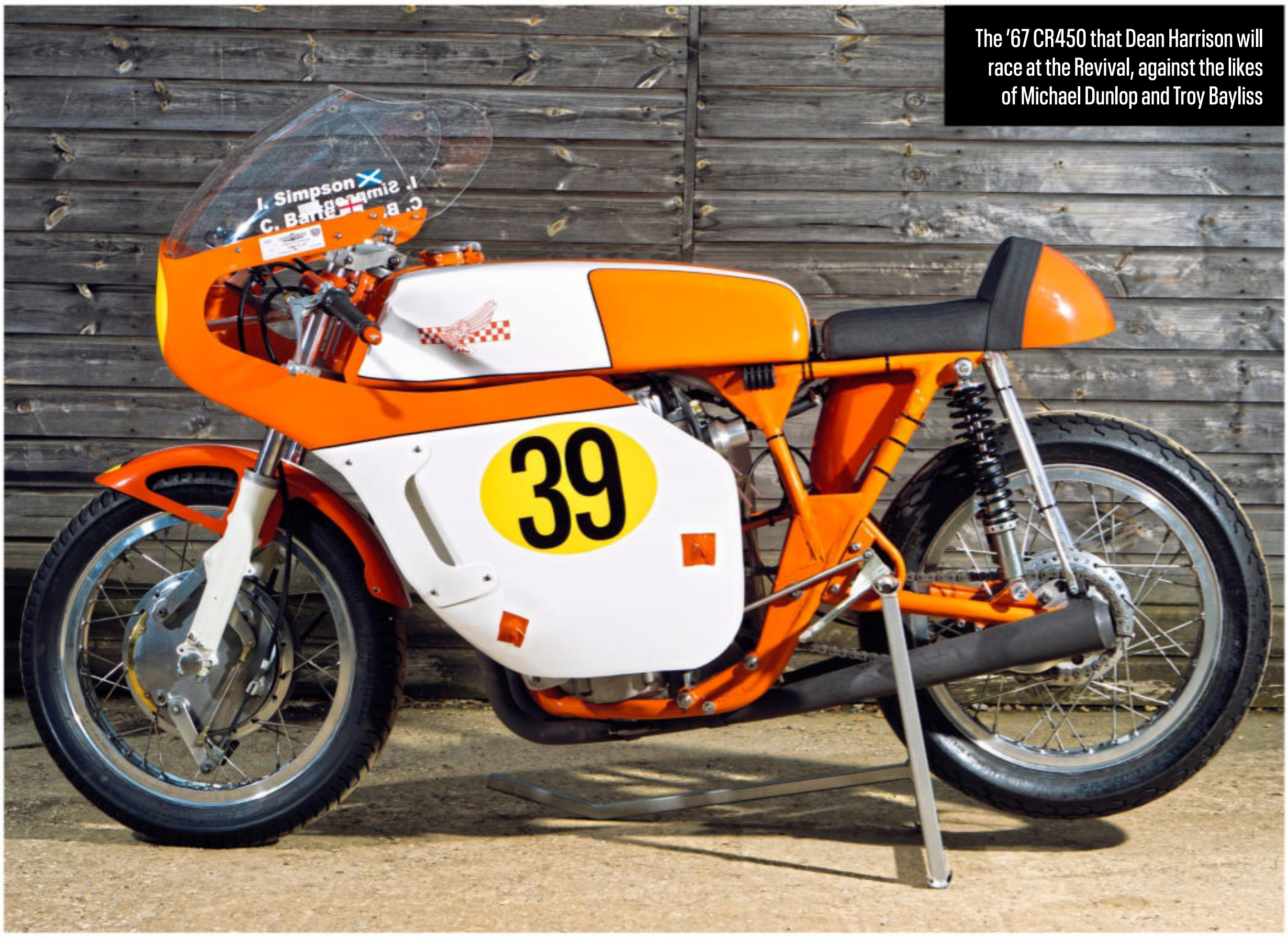

The '67 CR450 that Dean Harrison will race at the Revival, against the likes of Michael Dunlop and Troy Bayliss

Harrison stars on 1967 CR450

TT winner enters to ride historic factory racer at the Goodwood Revival

As last-minute entries go, this was a cracker. Five-time TT winner Dean Harrison and a 1967 Hansen Honda CR450 replica were announced as entrants in this year's Barry Sheene Memorial Trophy at the Goodwood Revival, just days before the event was due to take place on September 13-14 (just after this issue of *CB* went to press).

The CR450 is a machine that was born to race. Based on the CB450, it was the result of US racers badgering Honda to make go-faster bits for the humble CB – and it became Honda's biggest-capacity factory production racer.

Chief among those hassling Honda to produce the bike was Bob Hansen, an American Honda dealer and race fanatic who Honda charged with assembling and running the bikes in the States. This was a big deal for Honda, because Grand Prix racing (where most of Honda's race efforts went) meant little to US customers.

Changes to the CB450 were plentiful. The front brake was upgraded to an eight-inch four-leading-shoe drum, forks came from CL-series scramblers with the damping adjusted for road racing, the frame was strengthened and a fairing added.

There was surprisingly little done to the engine, however – most of the performance gains came from the application of Keihin racing carbs and subtle tuning, rather than wild camshafts and vastly increased compression ratios. Honda never went as far as to release power figures for the bike, but the CRs were clocked at 132mph, compared to the 110mph claimed for the standard CB.

Harrison's rivals at the Revival mean victory is by no means guaranteed: Michael Dunlop, John McGuinness, Steve Plater, Troy Bayliss, Carlos Checa and Leon Haslam could prove troublesome...

Full Revival report in next month's CB

Seymour exhibition

Ralph Seymour had an astonishing life in bikes. He was the first bloke down Bray Hill when the TT restarted after the war, became a world-renowned Velocette tuner, and his motorcycle dealership RJ Seymour ran from 1960 until 2012. His life is being celebrated by an exhibition in Thame, Oxfordshire and runs until October 25. It's free to enter. More info: thamemuseum.org

Ralph Seymour at the TT on one of his Velos

What's new

Commando discharged

Norton are stopping production of the Commando 961, the modern descendent of the classic 750/850. But it seems unlikely it'll be the end of the Commando – Norton will announce a new range at the end of the year and insiders reckon there'll be a new version.

BAUER ARCHIVE

Ex-Hayden Ducati sold

This Ducati GP8 that was ridden by Nicky Hayden in the 2008 end-of-season MotoGP tests recently sold for £213,000. Decked out in a stars and stripes paintjob because of sponsor problems from his previous Honda contract, the bike was in 'collection condition' and will need fettling to run.

New loom for £33.60

If you have a Vespa Rally 200 scooter with dicky electrics, VE (UK) now have the answer: replace the entire loom. It comes in two versions: one for machines with a kill button, the other for those with a kill switch. Both versions cost £33.60. More info on 01159 462991

Watsonian wit

Watsonian Sidecars have released this rather excellent new workshop sign, complete with painted 'rust'. It's yours for £40 from watsonian-squire.com

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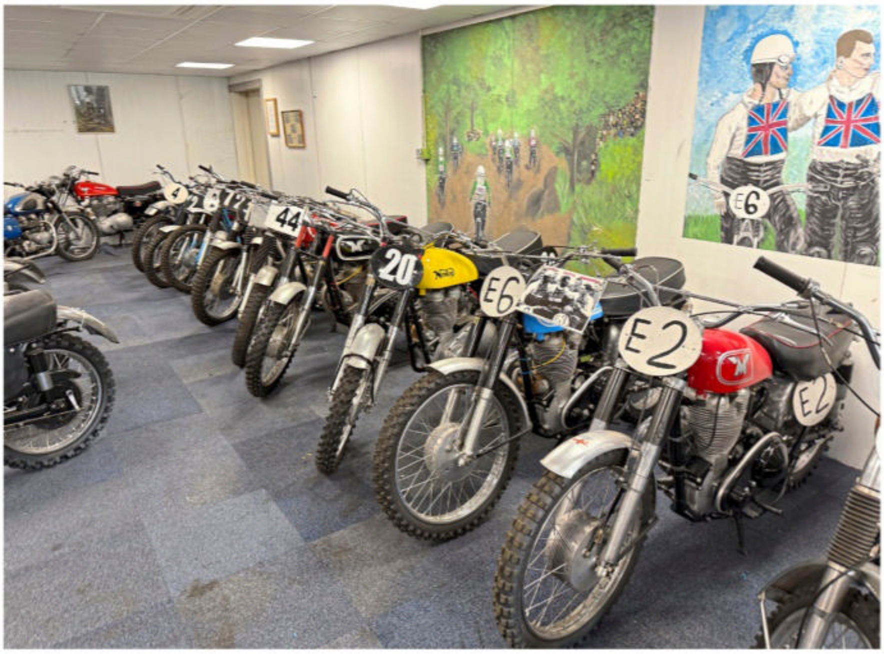

DAVE CURTIS ARCHIVE

MX star sells collection

Factory motocrosser Dave Curtis offloads 45 scramblers

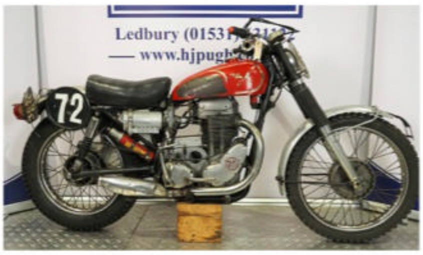
The 1958 British 500 motocross champion Dave Curtis has decided to sell his huge collection of scramblers and parts.

Curtis was a Matchless works rider from 1954 to 1962, won the British motocross GP in 1961 and was a member of the British team which won the 1954 Motocross des Nations. He held on to many of his race bikes and later expanded his collection when he retired. He continued running his motorcycle dealership for many years, so was well connected in the trade.

"One of the most interesting bikes is the 1960 Matchless G80CS," says Henry Biss, from auctioneers HJ Pugh. "Dave rode this to victory in several six-day events – it's believed to have won six gold medals. The engine turns over with compression, but it has been dry stored so will require recommissioning. It's fitted with a Lucas competition magneto.

"There are also two Gold Stars, a Norton P11, a Royal Enfield Fury and lots of engines and parts," adds Henry. "Dave is now in his 90s and decided to move the whole collection on."

The sale took place as *Classic Bike* went to press. Sale highlights next month.



1960 Matchless G80CS: a winner in six-day events

Snake Pass is saved!

Eleven months ago, *Classic Bike* reported that the Snake Pass – the historic road that weaves across the Derbyshire Peak District between Glossop and the Ladybower Reservoir – was at risk of closure due to funding shortages. We're relieved to learn that the Government has coughed up the £7.6m needed to stop landslides and build safety barriers for bikes, so it will stay open for decades.

SIMON HIPPERSON

New safety measures will ensure the road's future

BSA

MOTORCYCLES

GOLD STAR FLIP COVER WATCH

Innovative flip-cover opens to reveal a sleek precision dial

Golden BSA winged logo

Individually numbered and engraved with BSA motorcycle design on the casing reverse

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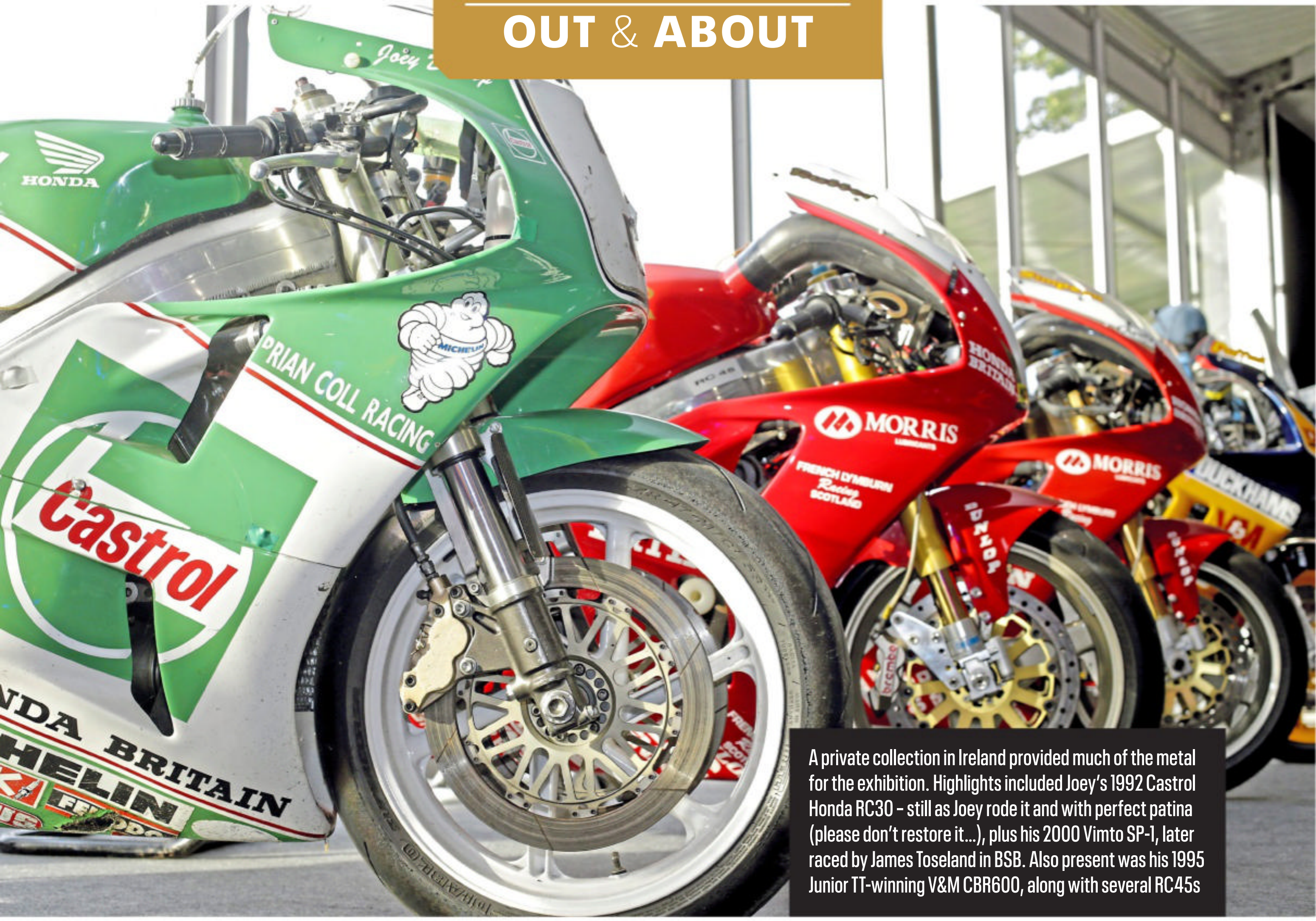


A private collection in Ireland provided much of the metal for the exhibition. Highlights included Joey's 1992 Castrol Honda RC30 – still as Joey rode it and with perfect patina (please don't restore it…), plus his 2000 Vimto SP-1, later raced by James Toseland in BSB. Also present was his 1995 Junior TT-winning V&M CBR600, along with several RC45s

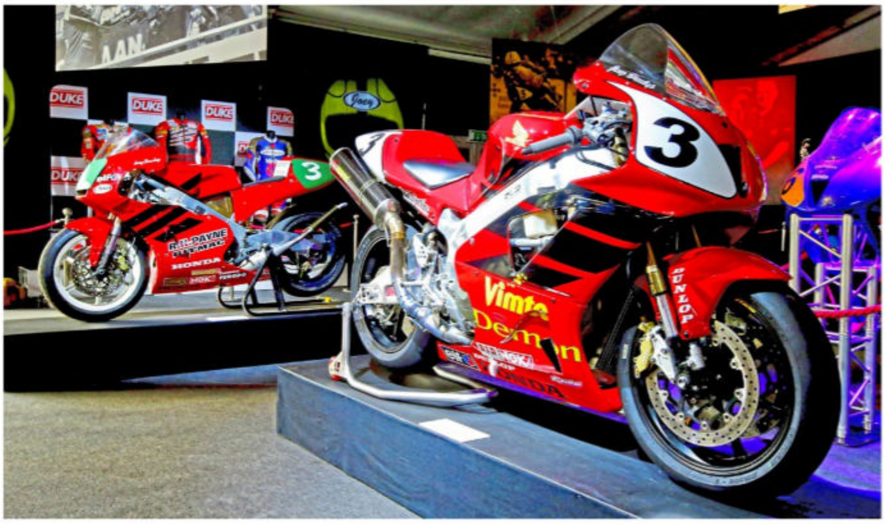
Joey Dunlop Exhibition

This year's Classic TT featured a special exhibition marking 25 years since we lost TT legend Joey Dunlop. *CB* popped along to the celebration of his life and astounding career

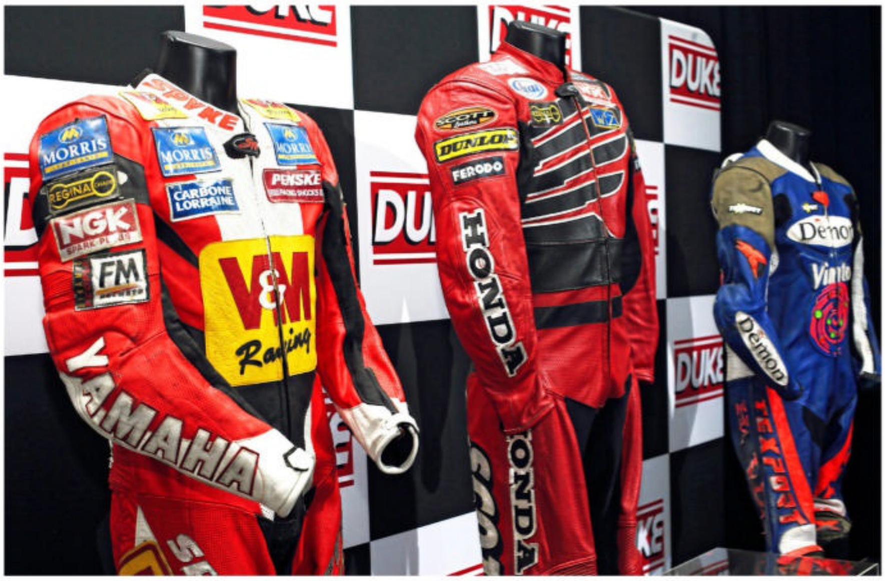
It's a quarter of a century since Ulsterman Joey Dunlop did the unimaginable, taking his final three TT wins – including an incredible F1 victory – an amazing 23 years after his first victory on the island.

His wins in 2000 (his third TT hat-trick) were all the more remarkable given Joey was 48 years old and hadn't won a 'big bike' TT since 1995. He took the top step in the Ultra-lightweight (125), Lightweight (250), and F1 race, as well as the final podium spot in the Senior. It was his most successful TT in years. The stuff of legend.

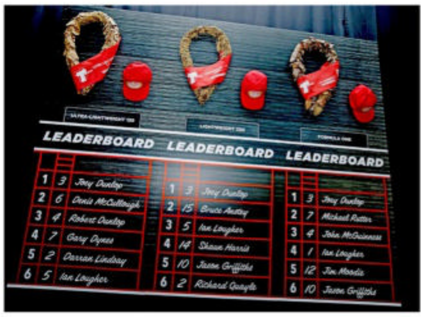
And then, less than a month later, he was gone. Joey's legend lives on, however. Only his nephew Michael Dunlop has won more TTs, so it was appropriate that Michael played a pivotal role in putting together a selection of 'Yer Maun' memorabilia at this year's Classic TT, as part of an exhibition and celebration of Joey's life.



Michael Dunlop built this replica of Joey's 2000 Honda VTR1000 SP-1 in memory of his legendary uncle. Honda famously moved heaven and earth to give Joey the bike he wanted for that year's TT, pulling strings that wouldn't even have got touched for any other rider. Joey felt the bike wasn't fast enough, so Honda shipped over a factory HRC engine from Aaron Slight's WSB machine, along with a factory swingarm and suspension parts. Joey did the rest. The bike in the background is his winning 250.



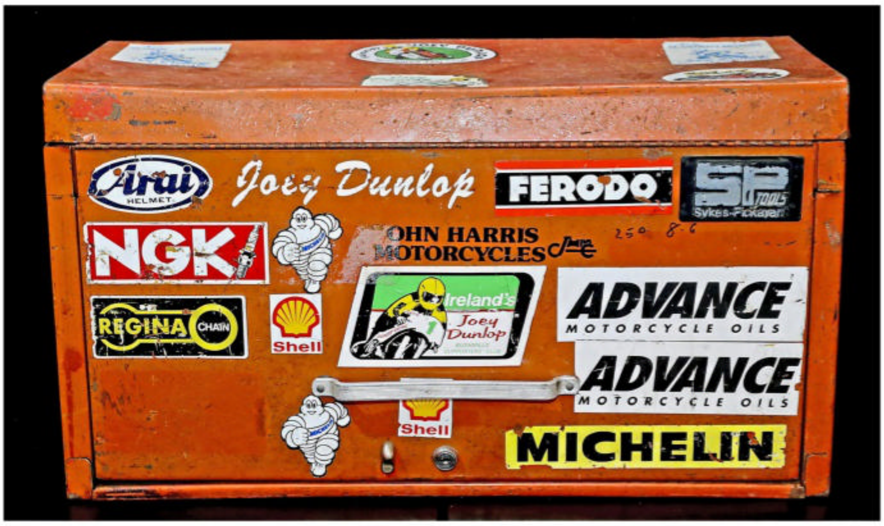
A reconstruction of the podium from TT 2000's Formula 1 race, which Joey won spectacularly from Michael Rutter (V&M Yamaha YZF-R1) and John McGuinness (Vimto Honda VTR1000 SP-1). Joey had made a concerted effort the previous winter to get fit, losing weight and cutting back on the beer. The svelte cut of his Scott leathers proves as much. He went to that year's TT to win. Nothing else would do.


LEADERBOARD
LEADERBOARD
LEADERBOARD
1 3 Joey Dunlop
2 6 Denis McCullough
3 4 Robert Dunlop
4 7 Gary Dynes
5 2 Darran Lindsay
6 5 Ian Lougher
1 3 Joey Dunlop
2 15 Bruce Anstey
3 5 Ian Lougher
4 14 Shaun Harris
5 10 Jason Griffiths
6 2 Richard Quayle
1 3 Joey Dunlop
2 7 Michael Rutter
3 4 John McGuinness
4 1 Ian Lougher
5 12 Jim Moodie
6 10 Jason Griffiths

'Leaderboards' from Joey's remarkable triple in 2000, complete with winner's wreaths and caps – including for the Formula 1, arguably his finest victory on the Isle of Man. All the great man's winner's replicas from that year, which were loaned to the exhibition by the Dunlop family, were also put out on display.

2000 ULTRA-LIGHTWEIGHT TT UNOPENED CHAMPAGNE

The unopened bottle of Moët champagne that was handed to Joey on the Ultra-lightweight podium in 2000. It's a mark of Joey's commitment to staying off the sauce.


Arai HELMET
Joey Dunlop
FERODO
SP TOOLS
NGK
JOHN HARRIS MOTORCYCLES
REGINA CHAIN
Shell
Ireland's Joey Dunlop
ADVANCE MOTORCYCLE OILS
ADVANCE MOTORCYCLE OILS
Shell
MICHELIN

Joey wasn't simply an ace racer, he was also a gifted mechanic and insisted on preparing his own bikes. It was the final part of the jigsaw that gave him confidence to push where others would back off. This is one of the toolboxes he'd have in the back of in his race van, complete with a patina befitting the man.

WORDS: JIM MOORE PHOTOGRAPHY: DAVE COLLISTER

Diary dates...

September 27-28 Classic Motorcycle Racing Club
The CRMC head 'darn sarf' to the Indy circuit at Brands Hatch. Expect everything from vintage thumpers to searing two-strokes and 1990s superbikes. The racing's always close, the schedule's always packed and Brands is great for spectating.
crmc.co.uk

October 5 Scottish Twin Shock
Assorted classic motocross action, with loads of classes to keep you entertained: twin-shock, pre-1977, specials and pre-1990 125s, plus categories for young riders and those of a more senior standing. At the Drumclog Off-road Centre, a 30-mile ride south from Glasgow.
scottishtwinshock.co.uk

11-12 Classic Motorcycle Mechanics Show
Hundreds of trade stands, oodles of club displays, a competition hall and race bike display and celebrity guests, plus live stunt riding shenanigans. Oh, and of course a chance to find your next bike at the Bonhams auction. All in the familiar surroundings of the Staffordshire Showground.
classicbikeshows.com

25 Kempton Park Autojumble
There are seven one-day jumbles at the Kempton Park Racecourse through the year, which is a fair indication of how well established and popular the days are. In fact, they've been running for three decades. A fine opportunity to stock up on parts for that winter project.
kemptonautojumble.co.uk

25-26 National Motorcycle Museum Live
Fancy being guided around the world's finest collection of British machinery by *CB*'s own Rick Parkington? Get along to NMM Live, where you'll also have access to experts, see lots of famous folk, get the chance to test the latest retros and be endlessly entertained. It's free to get in, too. See page 67 for more.
nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk

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The classic bikes that you have found, restored or just taken for a ride

TOUAREG
TRANSALP

Mark's Transalp is well used - he's put 103,000 miles on it

MARK HARRIS

RIDDEN

Perfect for potholes

This is my 1997 Honda Transalp, which had sat in a garage in Brighton for 20-odd years and had done 815 miles before I got it. By a series of unfortunate events, my Suzuki V-Strom had been destroyed (Little Miss Muppet was yakking away to Goldilocks and didn't see the Big Bad Wolf coming). Then, all of sudden, this Transalp appears in Stafford. I'd already had two, one of which was identical to this one, bought new in 1997 (and 126,000 miles put on by yours truly).

In seven years, I have done 103,000 miles on this bike – and it still has its original spark plugs! It starts instantly, so if it ain't broke don't fix it. It's easy to service, apart from the tappets (done twice – no real change both times). It's on the original clutch, front discs and wheels, and I've even custom painted it – simple and crude, like the bike.

It's ideal for riding on this country's Moonscape roads. On several occasions, holes in the road have bottomed the suspension (eight inches of travel at the front, 7.5 rear), but the wire wheels are still taut and straight.

It even has two riding modes: Stop and Go. I'm wearing out faster than this damn bike! **Mark Harris, Stafford.**

Rob's Firebird is finished in an appropriate colour, considering it lives in Holland

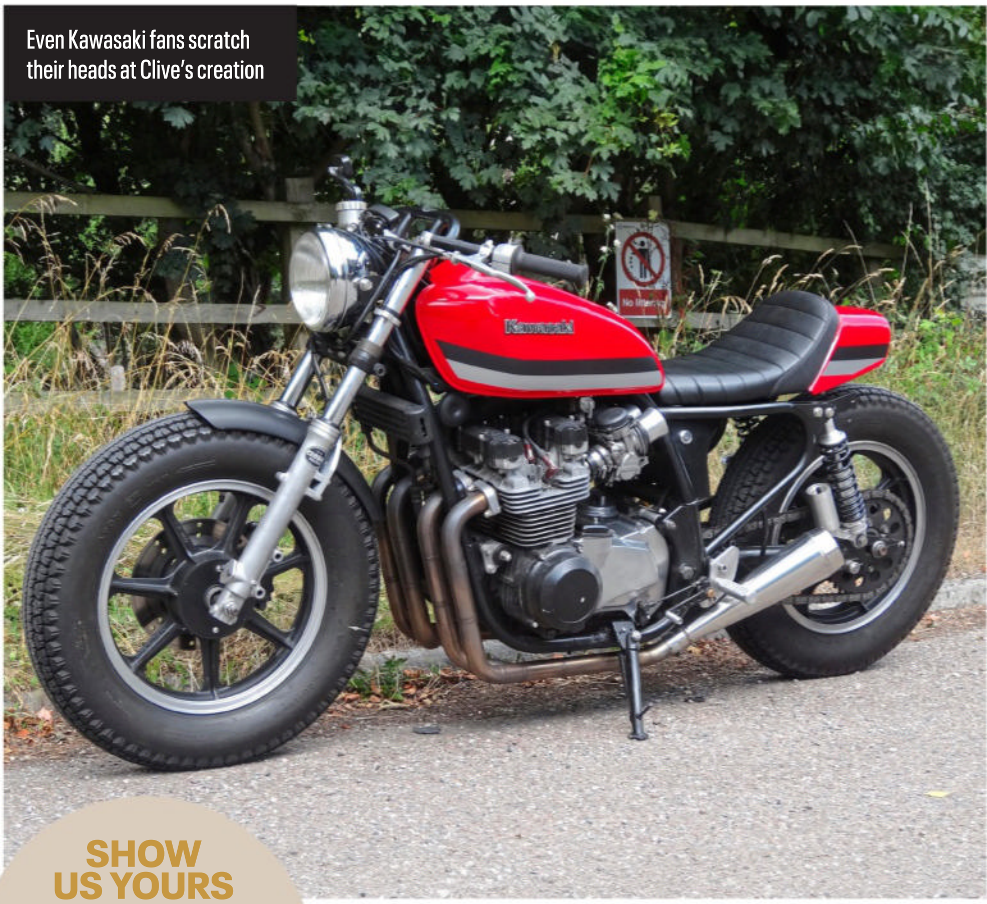
RESCUED

Unique Unitrak

My 1985 Kawasaki GPz750 Unitrak, which was rescued from the scrap man. It had been a streetfighter/matt black rat bike, had a sump full of petrol and missing piston rings. My friend Zane offered it me – and I am eternally thankful because I love it! Over the last few years, I've had a great time modifying it and riding it.

I first changed the frame to accept twin shocks. With this done, a Kz1000 swingarm fitted straight in. I lowered the forks by about two inches and a Z400 twin gave up its fuel tank, with a KH250 tailpiece finishing off the minimalist bodywork. I knew from the start that I wanted to run 16in Avon balloon tyres. A Z650 rear wheel went in the back and a Z250 custom rear wheel was modified to fit the front.

I love the fact that even Kawasaki fans can't quite work out what it is. Most people think it's a 550; it looks tiny beside a Z1000. I can't remember what the 34mm carbs came off, but she sings along nicely. She's definitely a keeper. **Clive Cook**


CLIVE COOK

Even Kawasaki fans scratch their heads at Clive's creation

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REVIVED

Firebird lights my fire

FIREBIRD
650
SCRAMBLER
ROB VAN DER VEGT

I bought my 1971 BSA A65 Firebird Scrambler two years ago in the UK, although it was originally delivered to its first owner in Newington, Connecticut, USA. Over the last two years, it has been restored to the condition you see here. It is not 100% factory correct, but close.

The engine was done in Germany – it had an SRM-like conversion, but with a spherical roller bearing for the drive side and a plain roller on the timing side. Other modifications made include an SRM sump plate and clutch pressure plate, dynamically balanced and nitrided crankshaft, alloy cylinders with Nikasil coating, forged pistons, Stellite valve seats, elephant foot tappets and Tri Spark ignition.

I'm planning to refurbish the wheels this winter and considering Cerakoting the exhaust, but for now it's being ridden regularly. Lovely bike.

Rob van der Vegt, Bruinisse, Netherlands

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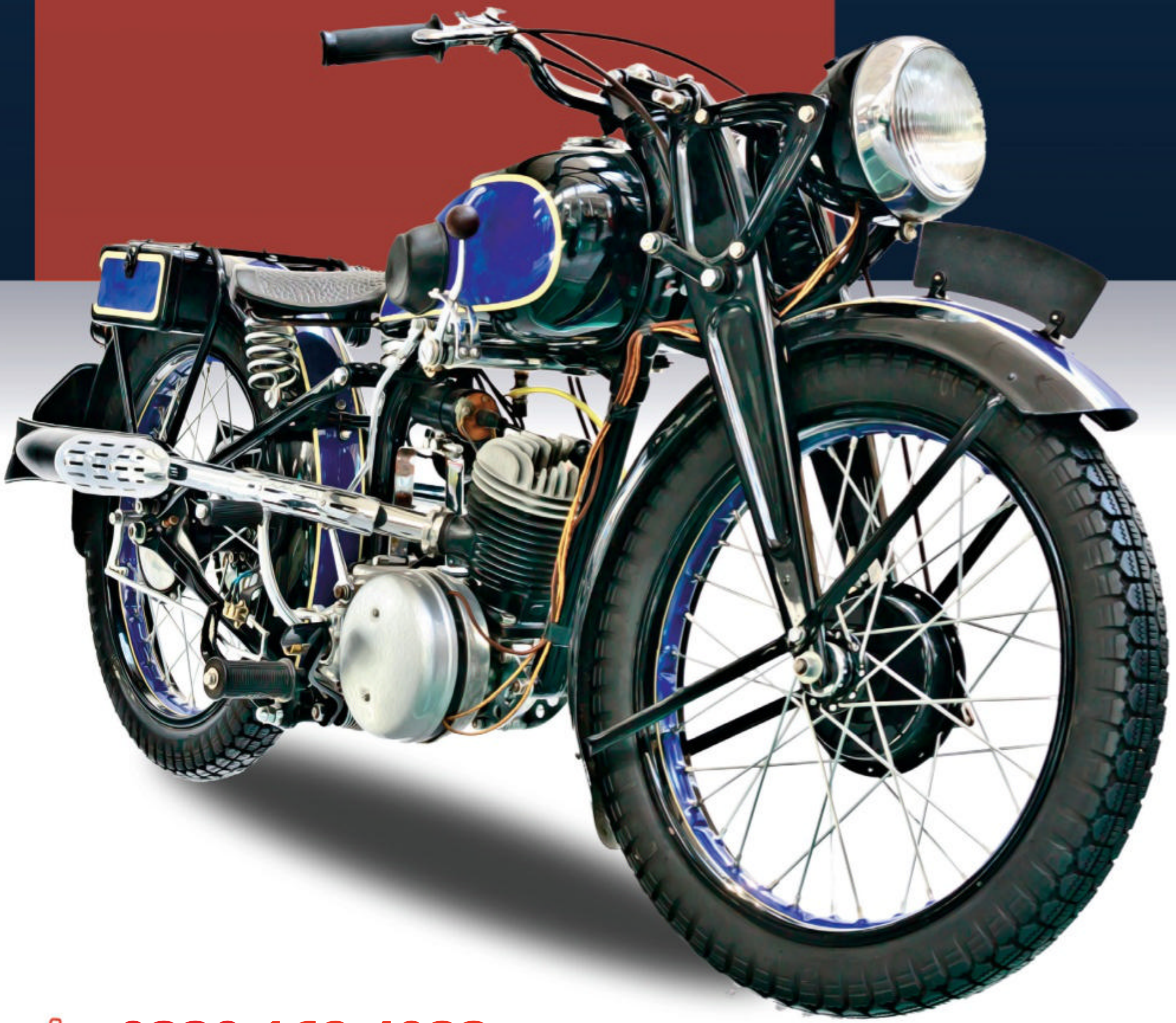

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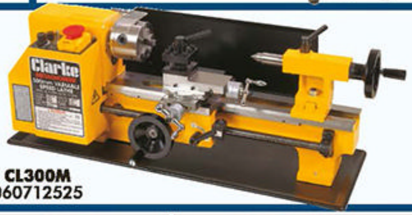

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THE VERY BEST OF BRITISH

Norvins are special – but this one more than most. So how did Gerry Fry transplant a Vincent V-twin into a Commando? And why?

WORDS **GEZ KANE** PHOTOGRAPHY **TIM KEETON**

Quality execution exudes from Gerry's Norvin – with double-takes from onlookers guaranteed

Norvin
HRD
agv

There have been some fabulous Norvins and more than enough questionable ones – but few are as mouthwatering as Gerry Fry's latest creation. "I started with a bent Commando frame and a Rapide engine," he recalls. "A Commando frame might not be the traditional starting point for a Norvin build, but I could see the potential."

It seems a brave move. Gerry committed to a whole stack of extra work by not using the classic Norvin mix of Vincent V-twin and Norton's legendary earlier Featherbed frame – but it was all a happy accident.

Gerry is a man of experience when it comes to Norvins – and classic bikes in general. He's been workshop manager at dealer Chris Bunce's Classic Superbikes in Fleet, Hampshire, for 13 years. It was Chris buying a job lot of Norton Commando parts and a Vincent Rapide 'bitsa' that triggered the 'lightbulb moment'.

"I love Commandos," Gerry smiles. "I owned six at one time, though I'm down to my last two now – a 1973 850 Roadster and a 1970 S Type. I was rummaging through the Commando bits, helping Chris sort them out, and we started looking at the Rapide, too. None of the numbers matched on it and it was missing loads of parts, so Chris said: 'There's a Norvin there.'

"That set me thinking..."

Gerry had owned his first Norvin when he was just a teenager. "I was working at Hawker Siddeley, training to become an aircraft engineer," he explains. "I'd already fallen in love with engineering – and bikes. A mate of mine at work used to work for Dave Degens at Dresda on Saturdays and raced a Norvin. I bought the Norvin from him as a box of bits, rebuilt it for the road and got it registered. I loved that bike."

He rode the bike for years, then eventually sold it to a mate. "He had loads of work done on it – and then years later he was selling off his bikes and I bought it back. Somehow, though, it just didn't feel or look like the bike I'd fallen in love with all those years ago, and I sold it on again. But it got me thinking about building another Norvin that I could really make my own."

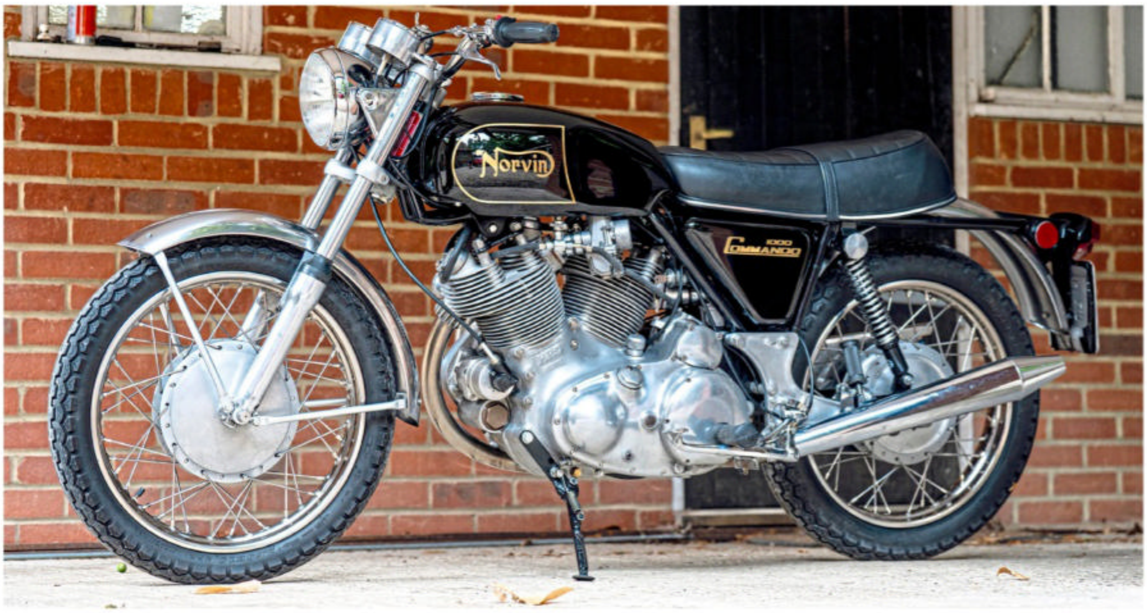
By this time, Gerry had left the aerospace industry and started working at Classic Superbikes (classicsuperbikes.co.uk). "A mutual friend knew Chris was looking for someone to run the workshop and suggested me. To start with, I'd stop off at Chris's one night a week on the way home from work and put in a few hours before going for a beer with him. After about a year, that had gone up to three or four evenings a week and soon we had more work coming in than we could handle."

On the night following the arrival of the Commando/Rapide job lot, Gerry had a revelation: "I got out of bed, fired up the computer and printed side-on photographs

RIGHT Entertaining crowds, Gerry on his earlier Norvin in the days before health and safety

FAR RIGHT: The very same Norvin, all modded up when it re-entered Gerry's orbit

RIGHT Gerry's latest creation has satisfied a yearning to build another Norvin – a very different one



Norvin
1000
COMMANDO
CLASSIC Super Bikes
HRD

ABOVE Builder and his bike: we'd have a smile that was this wide too

of an Egli Vincent frame, a Norton Commando and a Rapide, all to the same scale. I spent hours overlaying them and looking at the possibilities. By the morning, the concept of a Commando-framed Norvin was born."

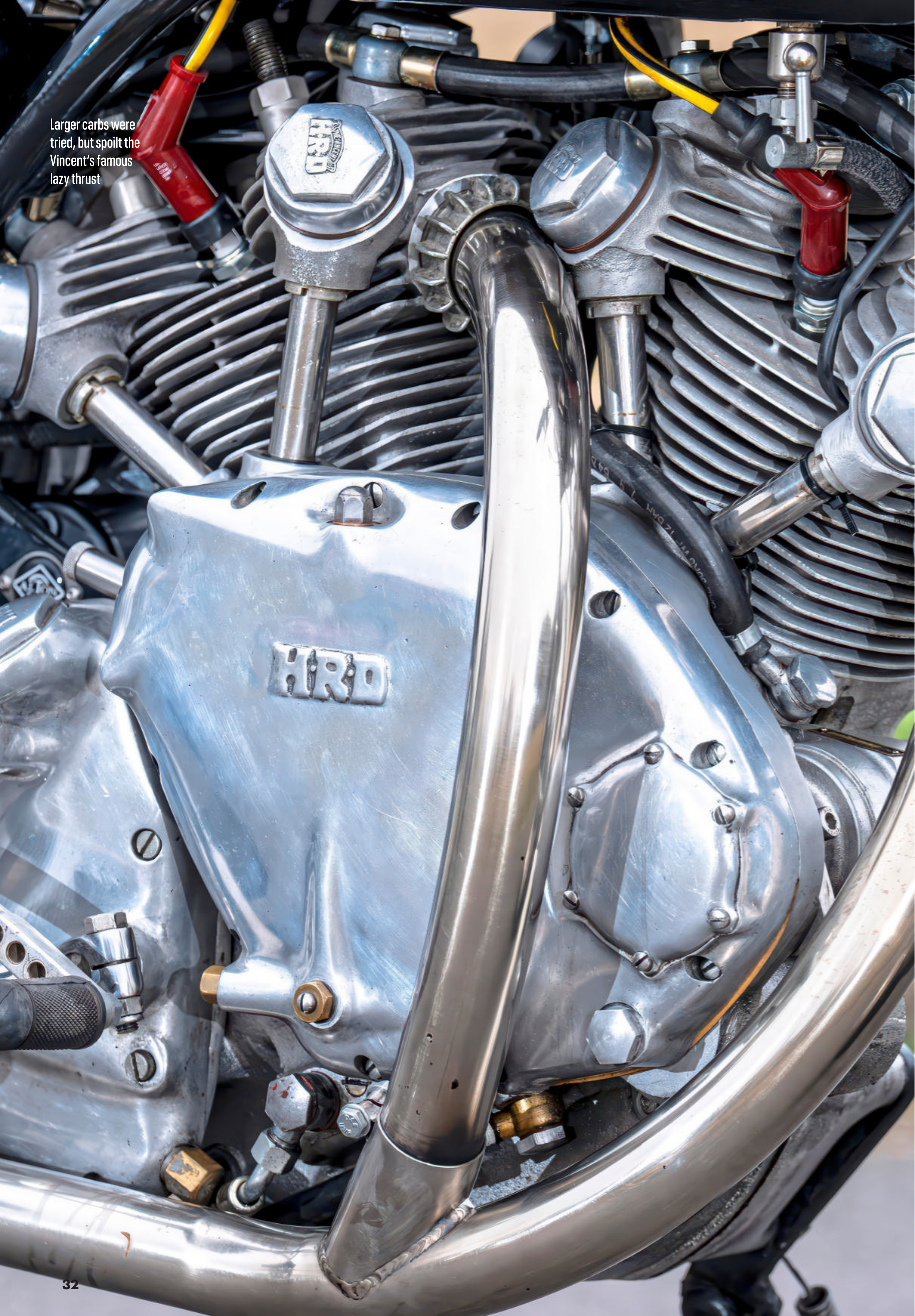
This was when the hard work started. "At first, I only intended to use the frame as a starting point to experiment with, and work out how to get the Vincent engine sitting right. But once I started getting everything to fit together as I wanted, I decided to get the frame straightened instead of replacing it and starting all the modifications over again.

"The engine looked like it had a fair bit of work done to it. The bottom end was actually very good, so were the con rods and pistons. The gearbox had been shimmed up, too. I had to sort out a bit of backlash in the timing gears and the primary drive was missing a few parts, but Vincent parts are fairly easy (though expensive) to source. I've stuck with the original Vincent two-stage clutch too, though there are a number of aftermarket clutch upgrades available. I splashed out on a new front cylinder head to replace the rear one, so I could mount both carburettors on the same side of the engine; I've used 30mm Amal MkII Concentrics. It looks much better. I tried 32mm carbs first, but the engine is a lot more tractable with slightly smaller carbs. Otherwise, it's pretty much a standard Rapide engine."

If Gerry makes rebuilding a Vincent engine sound straightforward – which it probably is to someone with his engineering ability – even he admits combining it with the Commando frame was a bit trickier.

"I wanted the bike to look as much like a standard Commando as possible," he says. "So I started out by positioning the swingarm spindle in exactly the same position as it would be on a Norton. Of course, the spindle pivots in the rear of the engine/gearbox cases on the Vincent, so that dictated the position the rear of the engine had to be in. From there, I could start to fabricate plates to mount the engine in the Commando frame. They took three attempts to get right."

Because the drive is on the right on the Rapide engine,



Larger carbs were tried, but spoilt the Vincent's famous lazy thrust

Gerry had to modify the Norton swingarm and rear wheel to suit. "I had to slim down the swingarm at the pivot to fit between the engine mounting plates," he recalls. "I've used a Norton spindle, tapped at both ends so I could bolt it up through the plate at both ends. I've also brought the chain line as far over to the left as possible to enable me to align the centre of the rear cylinder with the centre line of the bike, as it is on a Vincent. It meant I had to rebuild the rear wheel with a different offset and make up a crossover cable for the rear brake. Oh, and I found I had to tilt the engine forward a bit so I could get the rear rocker cap off for maintenance, too."

At the front of the Commando frame, Gerry cut away the downtubes and used the tubing to triangulate the headstock to the main tubular spine, also fabricating mountings from which to suspend the engine. And, behind the engine, he's neatly tucked the Commando oil tank between the engine plates. It's a tight fit, with the battery and the carburettor for the rear cylinder jostling for space – but he's packed everything in there, all neatly tucked away.

Gerry wanted the exhaust system to look like a Vincent from the front and a Commando from the rear – and it does. "I've used stainless steel Vincent downpipes and made up a crossover pipe that runs under the gearbox," he explains. "So both the Commando silencers are 'live'. It seems to work OK and sounds great."

The clocks, switchgear, handlebars, seat, controls and most of the rest of the bike are standard Commando parts. But Gerry's ingenuity has come in handy again for the electrics. "The magneto is a BTH unit meant for a Triumph twin, but I've rebuilt it to suit the 50° V-twin," he says, as if this was the easiest thing in the world to do. "I've used an Alton generator and the fabric-covered loom was originally intended for a dynamo AMC machine. I drew up a circuit for lights, horn and brake light and I've got one wire spare, so I'll be able to fit an electric start when I get too old to kick it over. I definitely won't be selling this one."

ABOVE *CB*'s Gez revelling in the V-twin's torque

The Norvin Commando has taken around four years of on and off work to get to this stage – Gerry has only recently started taking it out for a few shakedown runs. But now, having put a few miles on it and made a few more minor tweaks, he's happy (well, sort of) to let me sample what is certainly the only Norvin Commando I've ever seen.

After a briefing from Gerry on starting technique and a reminder of the slightly quirky action of the two-stage Vincent clutch (effectively two clutches in one), I'm ready to venture out onto the Hampshire byways. Once I get clear of the semi-urban streets of Fleet, any slight misgivings I have about that clutch are soon dispelled, the Norvin handling the rush-hour traffic on the way out of town with a stately calm. The clutch and gearbox behave faultlessly in the morning traffic, and it's immediately obvious just how well this bike has been put together.

First gear is fairly high, but the low-down torque the big

Gerry's top three tools

Slave oil tank

"Most workshops have a slave fuel tank to test bikes with the fuel tank off, but I also run bikes up without an oil tank fitted. This is the screen washer bottle from a Harrier jet. It's titanium and a thing of beauty. It has taps and the fittings are BSP (British Standard Pipe) too, like most British bikes."

Myford 7 lathe

"Quite small and old, but it's got me out of trouble countless times. I can usually find a way of doing what I want on it. I use it for making spacers, modifying fasteners and making things fit on special builds like the Norvin. I couldn't be without it, and it saves us time and money time and time again."

Timing light

"A cheap thing bought from eBay that runs off a slave battery. You don't need all the whistles and bells – just a light. It's all about interpreting the information you get from using it. I can check ignition timing, the advance curve and the 'cleanliness' of the spark. I make my own timing discs."

SPECIFICATION | NORVIN COMMANDO 1000

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** Air-cooled ohv 50° V-twin **Capacity** 998cc **Bore x stroke** 84 x 90mm **Compression ratio** 6.45:1 **Carburation** 2 x 30mm Amal Concentric MkII **Primary/final drive** Chain/chain **Clutch** Combination of drum 'servo' type and single plate, dry **Gearbox** Four speed **CHASSIS** **Frame** Tubular spine **Front suspension** 1.36in (34.58mm) forks **Rear suspension** Twin Girling shocks **Front brake** 8in (203mm) twin-leading-shoe drum **Rear brake** 7in (178mm) single-leading-shoe drum **Wheels** Spoked **Tyres** 3.60 H 19 (F), 4.10 H 19 (R) **DIMENSIONS** **Wheelbase** 56.75in (1441mm) **Seat height** 31.3in (795mm) **Fuel capacity** 3.2 gallons (14.5 litres) **Dry weight** 400lb (181.5kg) **PERFORMANCE** **Power** 45bhp at 5300rpm (claimed) **Torque** 65 lb.ft at 3800rpm (est) **Top speed** 112mph (est)

V-twin lump shovels out means that's no inconvenience. Gerry told me that he set up the bike to perform well at low speeds – and he's done a grand job. In fact, it makes a surprisingly good town bike. Even the brakes are well suited to stop/start traffic. While twin-leading-shoe drums can sometimes be a little grabby, this one is quite simply superb with a smooth, gradual action and plenty of power when I give the lever a slightly harder squeeze. And the rear brake, so often almost an afterthought, is perfect for controlling a slow trickle up to the next set of traffic lights.

Hitting open roads, the other side of the Norvin's character become clearly apparent. With the chance to open up the throttle and work that iconic engine through the gears, the lazy power of the Vincent unit shines brilliantly bright. In top gear, the rev counter shows an oh-so leisurely 1800rpm or so as 60mph comes up on the speedo – and yet there's plenty of instant power available for a rapid overtake with nothing more than a tweak of the twistgrip. With only a few test miles on the engine since its rebuild, I restrict the revs to 3000, but progress is still swift. With peak power coming in at 5300rpm, I know that this is going to be a seriously quick machine.

ABOVE Do you really need a Featherbed when the Commando behaves superbly?

Hustling the bike through fast corners and darting through tangled back roads never leaves me hankering for a Featherbed frame, either. The Commando chassis with its compliant suspension behaves supremely – it combines perfectly with the Vincent's power delivery. This truly is quite a package.

After an entertaining excursion on the Norvin, I reluctantly return to the workshop where Gerry has been cracking on with a customer's BSA while I've been enjoying myself. His smile of relief as I cut the engine and he can see I've returned his baby safely speaks volumes of his bond and passion for this Norvin.

I hope my daft grin and excited post-ride babble tell him what I think about the machine he's created. This is not just a fine special, not merely a good Norvin or even an exceptional classic bike. It's more than that. It's a genuinely outstanding motorcycle – and Gerry can look forward to many great rides to come. CB

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Matchless Model X

1912 Rudge Multi 500cc

1925 BSA G25 De Luxe

1955 Vincent Rapide Series D

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The World's Greatest Race Paddock

The Classic TT is the finest mass thrashing of old race bikes anywhere in the world. Inclement weather may have limited the race action this year, but the event's famously eclectic paddock showcased a weird and wonderful array of fast old bikes for visitors to feast their eyes – and ears – upon. There's no other paddock quite like it. We went along to pick out our highlights

Words **JIM MOORE** Photography **DAVE COLLISTER**

1992 Suzuki GSX-R750WN

DC Auto Repairs Newtown

Owner/rider Baz Furber, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire

"This is my third year here with the GSX-R. It's a WN model – the first water-cooled GSX-R. We've finished in the top 10 twice so far, so another result in the first 10 would be brilliant, particularly as some of the other bikes have moved on a bit. It gets faster and harder every year. The XR69 replicas have already disappeared.

"Gary Gittins at Braddan Performance does my engines; we're allowed to run 2mm oversize, but these are still on standard pistons and bores. Gary has gas-flowed the head and fitted cams to his spec, plus Mikuni TMR carbs. It's making 130bhp.

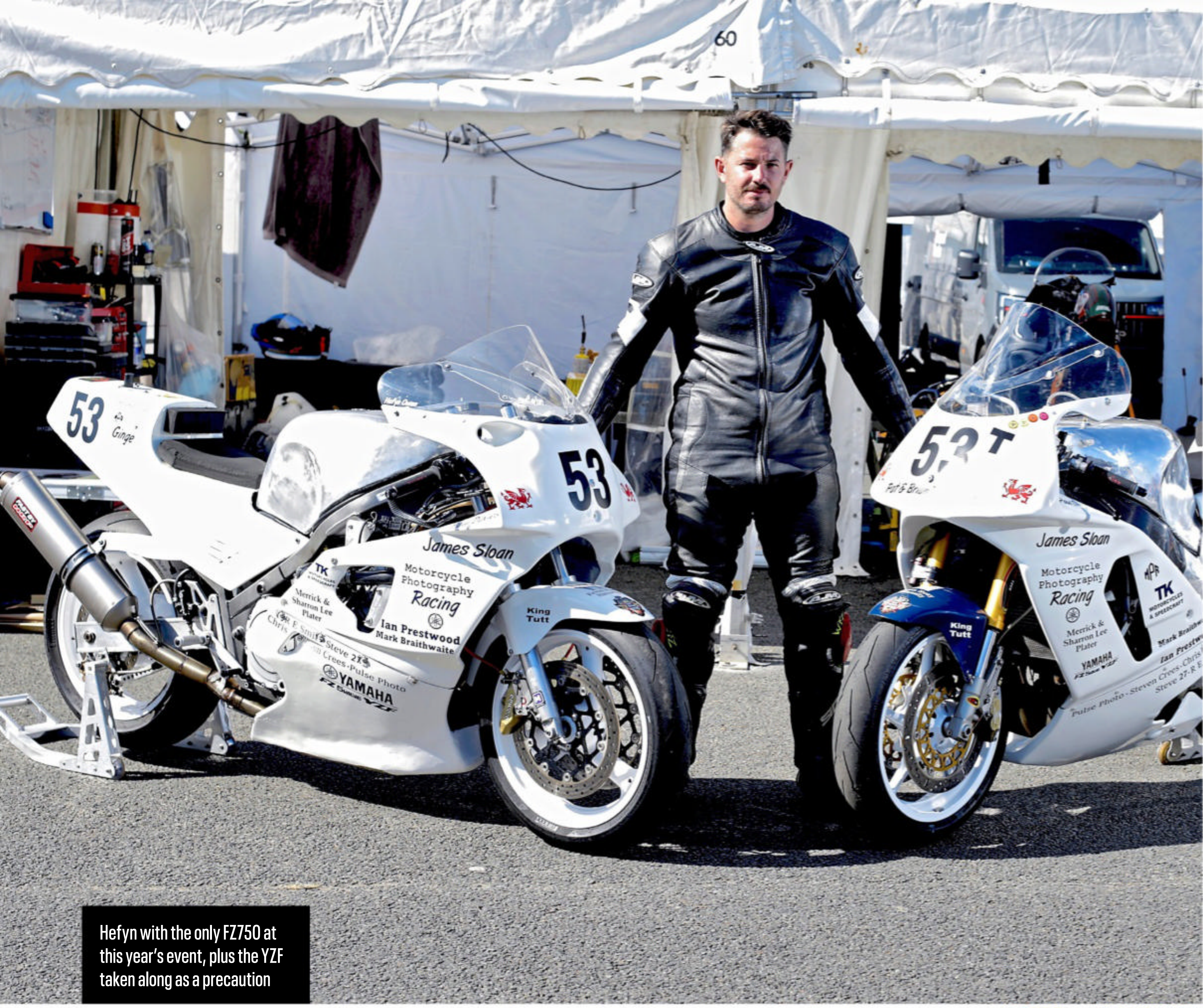
"The aim this year is to do a 122mph lap, which I should be able to do if I pull my finger out. I've managed a 120mph lap on it before. Last year was going to be my final crack at this event – but because of the weather we didn't get many laps, so I've dragged it out again. Weather's not looking too good this year, neither. Fingers crossed, eh?"

Baz put in a 121.71mph lap during Friday practice, putting him 11th fastest, then topped off the week with a fine fifth place in the Senior aboard a Honda 500.

MAIN SHOT Baz taking advantage of a sunny session at Ago's Leap

LEFT Mikuni TMR carbs lend a helping hand to the 130bhp output

Below The Shropshire rider nudged up to his lap time hopes on the GSX-R



Hefyn with the only FZ750 at this year's event, plus the YZF taken along as a precaution

'Running a ZXR750 is too easy…'

1987 Yamaha FZ750

2MG/Motorcycle Photography Racing

Owner/Team boss Graham Picksley
Rider Hefyn Owen, Anglesey, Wales

The Classic TT is a brutal battle against mechanical ills, stiff competition, the track itself and the elements. So why not add one more hurdle into the mix? Competing against a grid of finely-fettled '90s superbikes, Italian thoroughbreds and a fiery rotary Norton is hard enough, so why run a bike a decade older in design?

"Why not?" grins Graham Picksley, owner of the sole Yamaha FZ750 entered in the Classic F1 race. "It'd be boring if we were all on the same bikes. And pre-'86 rules allow us to run a bigger engine – from an FZR1000 Genesis – which gives us extra grunt. We hit 165mph down Sulby Straight last year."

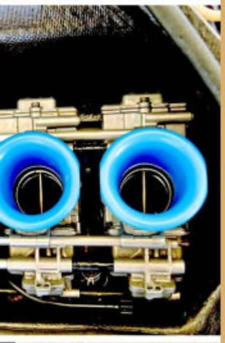
Although an FZ at heart – the frame is from an '87 2MG model – the rest of Graham's Yamaha is a glorious hotch-potch of parts, upgrades and developments, like any proper race bike. "The motor's running a 1020cc Wiseco kit, 13:1 compression, a later YZF750 cylinder head with REC stainless valves, Thunderace cams, FCR carbs, a bespoke pressurised airbox and a six-speed FZ750 gearbox – the FZR1000 runs a five-speeder. It makes 150bhp and 86 lb ft at the wheel.

"Wheels and suspension are off an FZR600 4JH, the swingarm's from a 600 Fazer, suspension is Maxton, the tank's a hand-made 29-litre job, and the fairing's an OW01 replica – it's easier to get down behind than the standard FZ thing," says Graham.

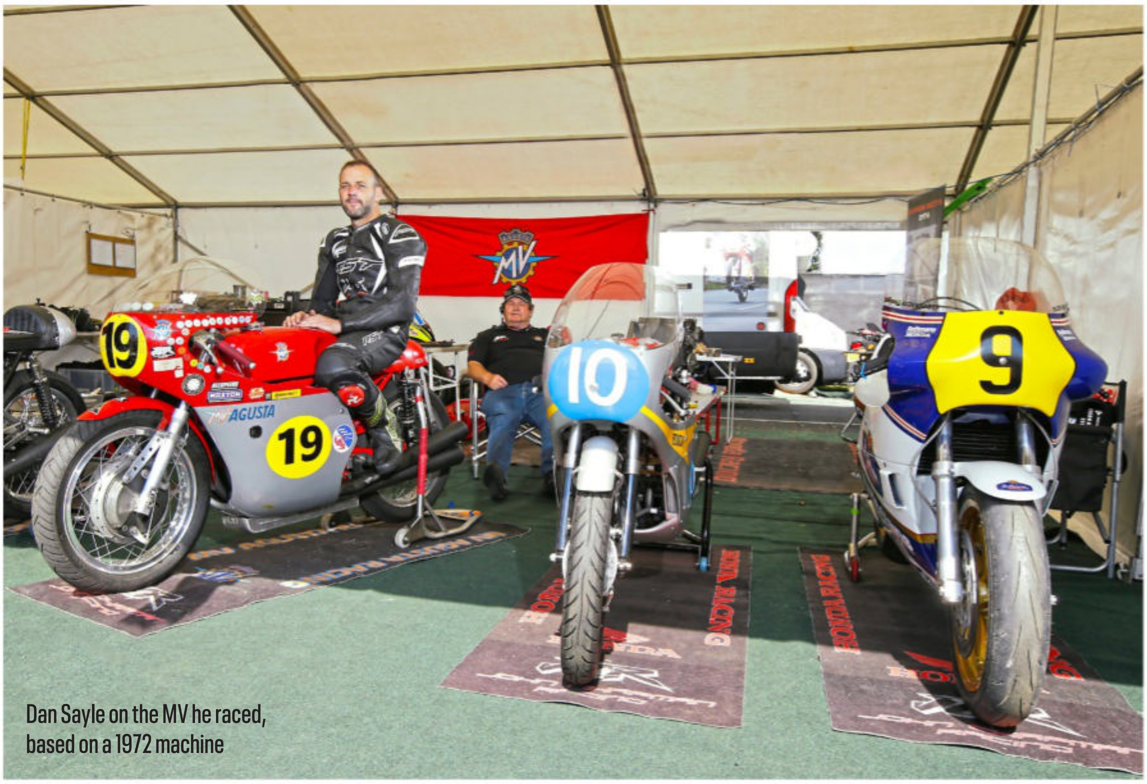
Seasoned G50 racer Hefyn Owen is new to the FZ, but he chipped away through practice until a blown radiator halted progress: "I popped a 110mph lap in on it straight out of the box". But Graham gave him options, bringing a YZF750 along as well – just in case. "I prefer the YZF's handling, it feels much sharper than the FZ, but the old bike's definitely got more grunt and stability."

Cancellation of the F1 race thwarted any chance Hefyn had of running either the FZ or YZF in anger. But they'll be back next year.

Flat-slide carburettors gulp down air from a bespoke airbox



When you're giving it full beans on the Island, a bit of bottoming out is par for the course



Dan Sayle on the MV he raced, based on a 1972 machine

1969/72 MV Agusta 500
John Chapman Racing

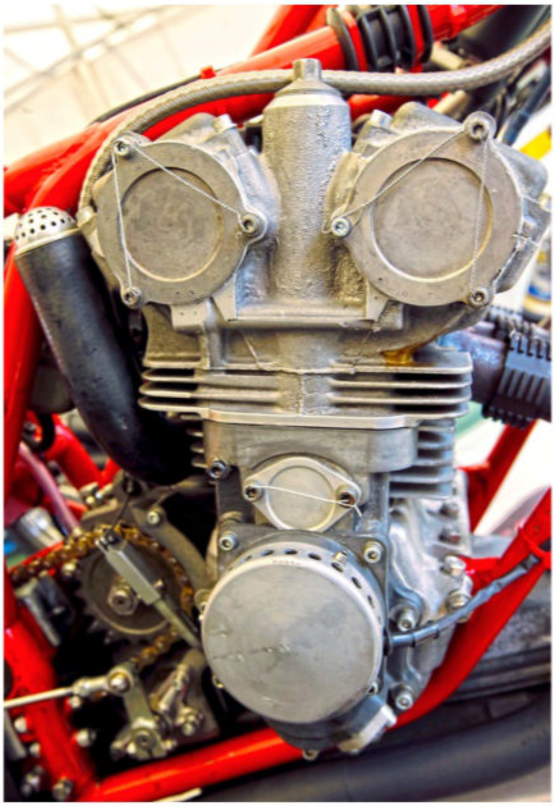
Team owner John Chapman
Riders Dan Sayle, Sulby, IoM; Davo Johnson, Adelaide, Australia

"We're running two MV 500s in the Senior," explains team crew chief Aaron McCloud. "One based on a 1969 bike with a slightly wider frame, ridden by Davo Johnson; the other one, for Dan Sayle, is based on a '72 machine. We've got them making just over 70bhp, which is a good boost from the 64-65bhp we had in previous years. Running them isn't easy, though. We can't just get new parts off the shelf – we have to get everything made.

"We've had new barrels made for the '72 bike – eight sets. They were cast by an old fella of 82 who's long since retired, but outstanding at what he does. They took 18 months to develop and get right – and £60k to produce. We've machined four of the eight, so we've got spares. A set of replica Dell'Orto carbs is £6000.

"Heat is the main issue with these engines. They cool via their deep sumps, but here we have to run bellypan catch tanks that obstruct the air flow. We've fitted oil coolers to help them run cooler. We've uprated the ignition systems too, although we're limiting revs to 11,500rpm – they will go on to 12,500rpm. We're restricting the boys to one or two practice laps as well, to save the engines for the race."

Dan went sixth fastest in Friday's qualifying session, with a 105.547mph lap, but retired from the race.



ABOVE Dan took his number 19 machine to a 105.547mph lap in Friday's qualifying session

RIGHT Spares have to be bespoke; the team had to get new barrels cast for the '72 bike

Dunlop just keeps winning

Michael Dunlop shows trademark commitment on his Honda RS250 in the Lightweight. The Honda V-twin required last-minute tweaking. The brakes were borrowed off John McGuinness' Vimto TSR250, his replica of the bike on which he won the 1999 Lightweight TT, and Dunlop was still playing with jetting right before the start. He won the two-lap race by a whopping 47.1 seconds. "I've always wanted to win a 250 race," said the most successful TT racer of all time (he won on a 125cc two-stroke in his 2006 Manx GP debut). The Honda was painted in the livery his dad Robert used and had previously been raced by his late brother William. "It's my own private bike, I've ridden it, my brother rode it... it's my pride and joy and stays in the house." After the race, Dunlop immediately whipped the still-warm brakes off and refitted them to McGuinness' bike so that he could do the evening's parade.

1972 Yamaha TX500
CSC Racing

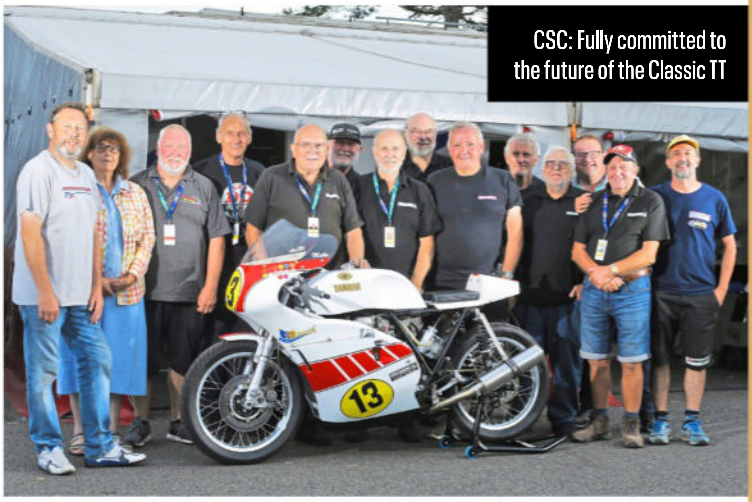
Team owner Steve Cattyn
Rider Michael Sweeney, Skerries, Ireland

Steve Cattyn runs one of the largest, slickest classic racing teams in the paddock. They fielded nine bikes, including a brace of CB350K4s in the Historic Junior class and a TZ250 in the Lightweight category, as well as two Yamaha TX500s in the Historic Senior.

"I love the Classic TT and I want the event to survive, so I'm putting my own money and time where my mouth is. I'm a big fan of the Honda 500 twins, but the Yamaha TX makes more power. It's a dohc four-valve unit – that's what makes it attractive for racing. We knew it as the XS500 in Europe, but in the States, where I sourced these engines, it's called the TX.

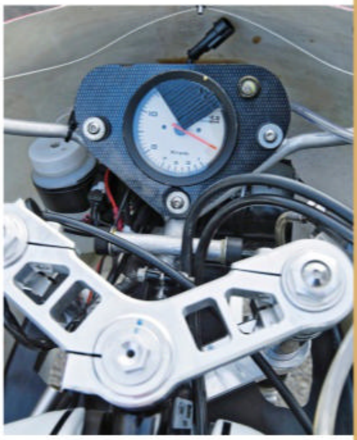
"We run them with six-speed Nova gearboxes and we're seeing 67-68bhp – 5-6bhp up on the Hondas, and the frames are by Davies Motorsport. You wouldn't want to run an old frame around here – it's so hard on the bikes. Ours are made from 531 tubing, so we know they're up to the job."

Mike Sweeney took his TX to a sixth-place finish in the Senior, just 0.0002s behind Baz Furber in fifth.



CSC: Fully committed to the future of the Classic TT

RIGHT TX500 catch tank: a vital addition for racing



FAR RIGHT Rider Michael Sweeney's usual in-race view of the TX500

Totally on it - Michael Dunlop on the RS250 in the Lightweight

The *CB* awards

Loudest (and best-sounding) bikes

John Chapman Racing MV 500s: Open-piped three-cylinder gorgeousness.

WizRacing Norton WRS588: Spine-tingling on the pipe - a ferocious sound.

Key Racing Ducati 916: The boom of a Bologna twin on the Mountain is simply glorious. We'll have much more on their bikes in a coming issue.

Unluckiest person

WizNorton Racing gaffer Andy Wilson: The team's gorgeous DKW W2000 blew two engines during practice, forcing the lads to work into the night rebuild the thing - only for it to give out again in the race.

Seasoned competitor

62-year-old Ian Lougher: First stood on an Isle of Man podium on his Manx GP debut at the 1983 Newcomers 350cc Junior. It's amazing that, 42 years later, the relentless Welshman is still getting podium finishes - he finished second to a flying Michael Dunlop in the Lightweight.

PLUS THANKS TO... The Steam Packet Company (steam-packet.com) for ferrying us back and forth to the most glorious island in the Irish Sea.

'100 hours just to make the exhaust'

1990 Ducati 851 SP

CK Racing

Team owner Chris Kaey
Rider Andrew Farrell, Skerries, Ireland

Andrew Farrell on CK's 851, built with a mixture of uprated parts and pure passion

"It's a 1990 Ducati 851 SP2, number 117 off the production line. I bought it as a frame from a friend of mine in Belgium and then got Phil Smith of Storm Performance Fabrications, who also built the titanium exhaust system, to strengthen the chassis with '93-spec bracing that's removable if need be.

"We've been racing the bike for four years now; we had Ian Lougher on it at first, but we struggled with the late delivery of parts and we were as green as could be. We were lucky to have Ian, but there were too many pieces of the jigsaw missing so we couldn't make a result happen. For this year we've got Andrew Farrell riding and the aim is to get a finish. The bike's capable of a top 10 – it's already won at Armoy.

"Our priority when building the bike was safety. It's brutal on machinery around here and these bikes were designed for WSB, not the roads, so everything on the bike is essentially new or uprated to cope with the stress. Yokes are CNC'd by Pro-Mach, as are the axles and steering damper bracket. The wheels were specially made by Marvic to run WSB-spec brakes. Phil put in over 100 man hours just to make the exhaust system – it's a work of art.

"I've brought a 916 with us as well. It's what we'll race next year. It's an ex-Peter Graves bike that he used in BSB in 1996. It's got lots of factory upgrades, like the suspension, so it's been a costly build. I've got no sponsors – all my money goes into this, because it's my passion. I just hope the weather holds..."

1994 Yamaha YZF750R

Stanford Halliday Racing

Team Boss Mark Halliday
Rider Jorge Halliday, Glen Maye, IoM

"This is only my second go at this event," says Manx-based Jorge Halliday, who's more used to racing modern 600s than the '94 YZF750 he's brought for the Classic F1 race. "And last year I only got four laps – that's practice and the race, without even one proper flying lap, so this feels like we're back to square one again."

"The bike belongs to Davies Motorsport from Tamworth, who supported us last year," says Mark, Halliday Snr. "Jorge's been out on it once at Oulton for a test, won on it at Bishop's Court, then out for another test at Donington. We've just swapped engines. The one that was in it felt a bit slugglish."

"You have to ride this YZF in a certain way," says Jorge. "It's quite heavy compared to the 600s I'm used to – some of that's the fuel load with a 24-litre tank, plus there's nothing from the engine below 8000rpm; it's like riding a two-stroke. I'd expected it to have some low-down grunt. We'll keep chipping away and improving the bike. It's on Pirelli Super Corsas now, but for qualifying and the race we'll run Metzelers."

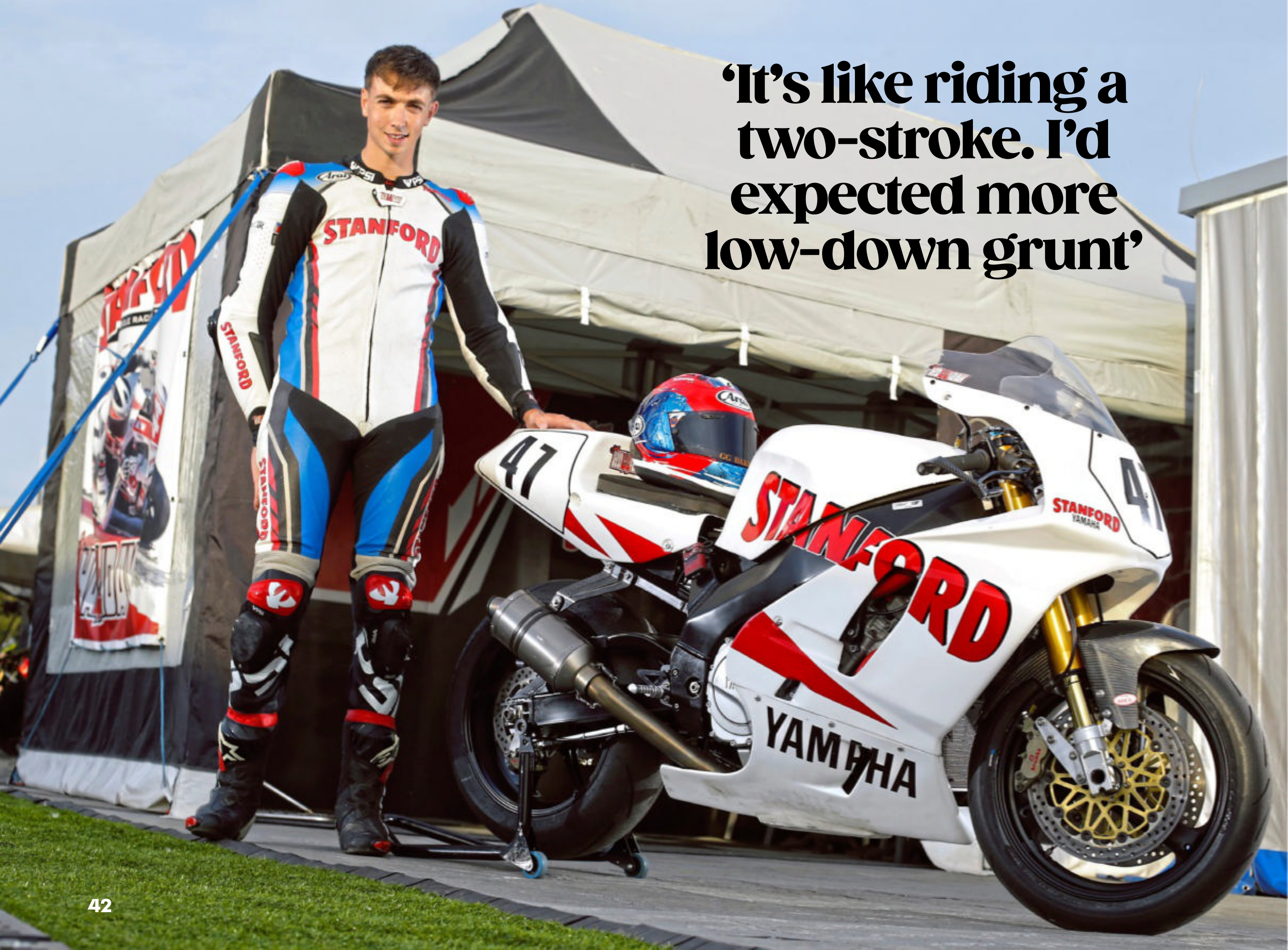
Jorge clocked a 112.076mph lap on the final night of practice, putting him 20th on the time sheets.

LEFT Close-up on the clutch linkage. The engine had just been swapped

LEFT Engine only really gets going at over 8000rpm

BELOW Rider Jorge's getting used to the weight and power delivery of the YZF

'It's like riding a two-stroke. I'd expected more low-down grunt'



The team were 'feeling our way' at their first Classic TT

1970s Ducati Mk3 350 & 500

Van Giersbergen Motoren Revisie

Crew chief Alex Heezen
Rider Jeffrey Vermeulen, Netherlands

"This is our first time at the Classic TT, and it's been great," explains crew chief Alex Heezen who, along with Eldert Rademaker and Tom Copenbrander, fettles the team's Ducati 350 and 500 for rider Jeffrey Vermeulen. "We're having to make educated guesses with the bikes in terms of jetting and gearing – starting off rich and long, then easing back if needed, so we're feeling our way as we go – that applies to both us as mechanics and Jeffrey as the rider.

"The bikes are based on '70s Mk3s; the 450's been bored out to 500 to give a bit more power – we're getting 60bhp out of the 500 and 44bhp from the 350. Both like to rev, but we're limiting them to 8500rpm and 9000rpm respectively, for reliability. There's no point having more power if the bike won't last the distance. We've fitted 24-litre tanks to both bikes and enlarged the fairings so that Jeffrey can tuck down behind them, because so much of the running here is flat out."

Jeffrey took a strong 11th place finish in the Senior race and 16th in the Junior.

Steering dampers get a right battering on the Island

2025 CLASSIC TT RESULTS

Historic Junior, one lap

1 Paul Jordan, Honda CB350K4
2 Dean Harrison, Honda CB350K4
3 Jamie Coward, Honda CB350K4
4 Dan Sayle, Honda CB350K4
5 Joe Yeardsley, Honda CB350K4

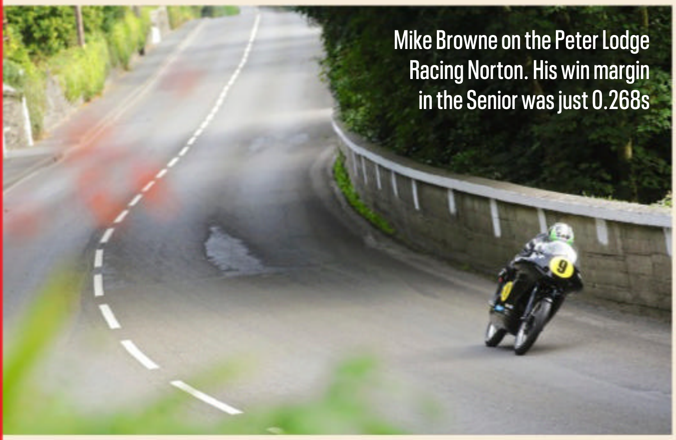
Historic Senior, two laps

1 Mike Browne, Norton 500
2 Adam McLean, Enfield Bullet
3 Dean Harrison, Matchless G50
4 Ian Lougher, Paton 500
5 Baz Furber, Honda 500

Lightweight, two laps

1 Michael Dunlop, Honda RS250
2 Ian Lougher, Yamaha TZ250
3 Adam McLean, Yamaha TZ250
4 Dan Sayle, Honda RS250
5 Stuart Hall, Yamaha TZ250

The event's big race, the Classic F1, was cancelled due to rotten weather. Kawasaki ZXR750-mounted Nathan Harrison topped final practice with a lap of 126.611mph, followed by Jamie Coward and Dominic Herbertson, both also on ZXRs, posting 125.879 and 124.943 laps respectively. TT star Ian Hutchinson (ZXR) was fourth, while Norton WRS588-mounted Michael Dunlop worked his way up to fifth fastest.



Mike Browne on the Peter Lodge Racing Norton. His win margin in the Senior was just 0.268s

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Seeing the light

Honda's modest **CB, CL** and **SL350** lightweight twins are sprightly, great fun and increasing popular. It's time to buy...

Words: **Gez Kane** Photography: **Bauer, Bonhams, Tanceymae, Wiki Commons**

Honda's humble CB350K really is a remarkable bike. Along with the street scrambler CL350 and trail-bike SL variants, way over 600,000 were built over a six-year production run. The CB350 family were the machines that really opened the door for Honda in the USA.

With smaller machines making a comeback with classic fans, their combination of peppy performance, relatively light weight and ease of handling is proving increasingly popular. All three variants share basically the same sohc parallel-twin engine, with minor variations to carburation and valve timing. With so many sold, mechanical parts are plentiful as both genuine NOS and pattern items, and they're relatively simple to work on.

And, if you're not convinced about referring to the CB350 as a 'sporty' roadster, consider its performance compared to its contemporaries. A top-end nudging the ton is close to any of its Japanese two-stroke rivals – and a match for Brit 500 twins of the era. That's probably why the CB350 has proved so successful in classic racing. Tuned race engines are capable of extraordinary speeds – one was clocked in the Isle of Man a few years back at 129mph.

As a classic ride these days, most owners won't want to push their CB350Ks that hard. But the CB's performance is still lively enough to get the blood pumping. Replace the original shocks with something a little more modern, freshen up the forks and slap on some modern tyres, and you'll find the handling more than acceptable as well.

Ride within the limitations of the drum brakes and a well-sorted CB350K makes a competent, enjoyable, cheery all-round classic with Honda reliability. And at the moment, they're good value, too...

THE BIG QUESTION

What's the crank like?

Top-end issues and rattly camchains are well documented issues with the CB350 (as well as its CL and SL cousins), but the parts to sort out top-end problems are readily available. Potentially more serious is the state of the crankshaft, according to Dave Greenham of D&M Engineering in Newark, Nottinghamshire – a man who's been bolting together indecently fast Honda classic racers for many years.

"The problem is that the crankpins are integral with the flywheels," explains Dave. "If the crankpins are corroded, you can't just press them out and replace them, you have to find a decent flywheel/pin.

"You're more likely to find this sort of problem on bikes that haven't been ridden for quite some time. Of course, because many of these models – especially the CLs and SLs – are coming to the UK from America, after standing unused for some time, it's worth bearing in mind that recent imports can suffer from this.

"If you find a bike that's been in regular use recently and sounds OK, that's probably your best bet. All the 350 twins can be great bikes though, with enough performance in a fairly lightweight package."

What to look for

Engine

Check that it runs smoothly and relatively quietly. Some early engines suffered from premature camshaft wear – caused by either faulty heat treatment or pieces of unsupported gasket material breaking off and blocking oilways. The hydraulic camchain tensioner fitted to the first models proved problematic, too. Go for a 1969-on bike to neatly sidestep both these problems. A rattly camchain on later models may point to the tensioner wheel breaking up. Replacement involves a top end strip.

Electrics

Lighting on all variants is marginal at best. Check everything works properly. A modern electronic regulator is a worthwhile upgrade. The battery needs to be in top condition for the ignition to work as it should, though electronic ignition kits are available.

Brakes

Check condition and operation of the twin-leading-shoe front brake. They do work reasonably well when properly set up. Amazingly, NOS brake panels are still available from CMS in the Netherlands, although they're not cheap at £365 including VAT. Many other brake parts are no longer available and will have to be sourced used.

Carburettors

Make sure the engine starts, runs and idles smoothly, and picks up well on the throttle. Pre-1972 models have CV carbs whose diaphragms can perish over time. Replacements are readily available and cheap enough, though. Various different carbs were used on CB/CL models over the years, so beware when sourcing parts or replacements. The SL has smaller, 24mm carbs.

Seat and bodywork

While most mechanical parts for all models remain available, some body parts are getting a little scarce - especially for CL and SL models. Most things do turn up on eBay in restorable condition, however, and good pattern seats are available.

Exhausts

Examine the exhaust system carefully for corrosion or damage. Good pattern replacements are easily come by for the CB models, but CL and SL systems are much harder to find, especially in the UK.

RESOURCES

D&M Engineering
Classic Honda specialist: engine rebuilds, restorations, repairs, tuning.
d-mengineering.co.uk

CMS
Netherlands-based parts suppliers for classic Hondas. Loads on the shelf for the CB/CL/SL350 models.
cmsnl.com

David Silver Spares
The UK's go-to supplier of classic Honda spares. Plenty of parts listed for the 350 twins.
davidsilverspares.co.uk

Nova Racing
Uprated clutch baskets and six-speed, close ratio gearboxes for the CB350.
novaracing.co.uk

John Oldfield Motorcycles
NOS Honda parts independent supplier.
johnoldfield.co.uk

SPECIFICATION
1973 HONDA CB350K4

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air-cooled ohc parallel twin
Dimensions	64 x 50.6mm
Capacity	325.6cc
Output	36bhp at 10,500rpm
Compression ratio	9.5:1
Carburation	2 x 28mm Keihin carburettors
Clutch	Wet multiplate
Gearbox	Five speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Combined pressed steel spine/tubular double cradle
Front suspension	33mm telescopic forks
Rear suspension	Twin shocks
Brakes front/rear	180mm (7in) tls drum front; 160mm (6.3in) sls drum rear
Wheels	Spoked
Tyres	3.00 x 18in front, 3.50 x 18in rear
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	1320mm (52in)
Weight	149kg (328 lb)
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	95mph (est)

Which to buy, what to pay...

The three incarnations – CB, CL and SL – don't seem to vary too much in price, so which you go for is down to taste.

CB350s are the most common model in the UK – the model was officially imported from 1968 in K0 form, with largely cosmetic changes until it made way for the G5 at the end of 1973. You may have to pay a slight premium for a first-year K0, but the difference shouldn't be more than 10%. Beyond that, model designation makes no significant difference to asking price and around £2500 should get you a good ready-to-ride machine. Even an immaculate example is unlikely to sell for more than £4000.

Some people prefer the two-tone colour scheme and slab-sided fuel tank on the K0-K2 bikes (the K2 doesn't have the tank-side rubber knee pads of the K0) to the more rounded K3/K4 tank – but mechanically there's little to choose between them. It's worth noting that the K1 model wasn't imported into the UK.

The street scrambler CL350 may be little more than a CB350K in its party outfit, but it looks a million dollars with its upswept two-into-one pipes and 19in front wheel. The 1970-on bikes with chromed exhaust heat shield are probably the best looking.

Performance may be down a little – the more restrictive exhaust sucks 3bhp from the CB's 36bhp top end – but few will notice that on the road, with a drop in overall gearing restoring the urge to the CL's acceleration. Perversely, though, you'll have to pay a little more for less power. A really top-class CL might command £4000-4500, although good, rideable bikes come up for around £1000 less.

1969 CB350 was little changed from first year model

The semi-serious off-road model, the SL350, is currently the most sought-after and priciest of the 350 twins. Two immaculate examples sold for just under £5000 at Bonhams Online Summer sale recently and you'll almost certainly pay at least £4000 for anything half decent.

The SL went through more development than either the CB or the CL, so there are a few more differences between models. From 1970, the SL was tuned for more low and mid-range torque, with non-CV 24mm carbs (smaller than the 28mm instruments on CBs and CLs) and a different camshaft. It also got a double-downtube frame and the electric starter that featured on the 1969 launch model was no longer fitted. In 1971, a 21in front wheel replaced the previous 19-incher.

> 'Even an immaculate CB350 is unlikely to sell for more than £4000'

Is the SL350 a great trail bike? Probably not. But it's a great machine for exploring back roads. The CB is a genuinely competent road bike and the CL has real presence and swagger. So which would we go for? We think a 1971 SL350 like the one above would do us nicely.

MODEL HISTORY

1968 Honda wheel out the new CB350K, which joins the similar CB250K in their ever-growing model line-up. Japanese home-market models are styled along similar lines as the old CB72/77 bikes, but export machines feature all-new sportier styling and pleasingly bright two-tone paint schemes. This is the desert sled era, and a street scrambler version of the bike – the CL350 – debuts at the same time.

1969 The CB350K0 and CL350 continue and are largely unchanged. However, the new SL350 trail bike is launched, bringing a smattering of decent off-road potential to the line-up of 350s.

1970 CB350K2 tank revised without kneepad rubbers. CL exhaust heat shield now has a chrome finish, rather than being painted black. There's more work on the SL350, which gets a redesigned camshaft and followers, and non-CV carbs, plus a new twin-downtube frame. Legs get additional exercise on the SL, as it's no longer available with an electric starter.

1971 Last year for the CL350. The CB350K3 continues largely unaltered. Late in the year (ready for the new 1972 model year), the SL350 gets a 21in front wheel and 35mm forks, increasing its abilities in the mucky stuff.

1972 Somewhat sadly, it's the final year for the greenlane-able SL350.

1973 Final year of the CB350 before it's shuffled to one side to make way for the new G5 model.

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1955 ROYAL ENFIELD Interceptor 750cc lovely bike	£5,350
1939 RUDGE AUTOCYCLE 98cc tidy machine	£2,000
1931 SUNBEAM 9 493cc lovely machine	£9,000
1949/51 TRIUMPH 3T 350cc CHOICE OF 2	£4,850
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1939 VELOCETTE MOV 250cc sweet machine	£6,500
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1962 VELOCETTE VIPER SPORTS 350cc lovely machine	£5,350
1954 VELOCETTE MSS 500cc smart bikes need fettling	£3,650
1949 VINCENT RAPIDE 1000cc last owner 15 years	£29,750

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The first factory Jotas were silver. This chap came from Scotland for his crate-fresh bike

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The Slater Brothers

It's exactly 50 years since the first Laverda Jota went on sale. We take lunch with its creators **Roger and Richard Slater** to find out how

By **ANDY WITHERS**

The idea of a couple of blokes from Herefordshire creating and naming a new superbike for an Italian manufacturer, developing the engine and then playing a huge part in its commercial success is outlandish enough. The fact that the bike in question is the legendary Laverda Jota – still a byword for Italian brawn 50 years after its launch – elevates the tale to an almost mystical level.

"It was an achievement," says one of the two blokes concerned, Richard Slater, 80. He's sitting with his 89-year-old brother Roger in the Collington Works where they turned Laverda's 1000cc triple into the Jota, as well as developing the Montjuic and Mirage. Their old workshops have been converted into a house, and the new occupants are kindly hosting our chat while supplying us with rather lovely home-made quiche.

Getting to the start of the Jota tale, I ask the brothers about the key meeting in the story – when Roger had the audacity to tell Laverda's board of directors that they needed to make a new superbike. Although the Slaters imported Laverdas into the UK at the time and had worked with the factory on race development, it still seems a remarkably brazen move.

"All the top guys were there," says Roger. "Massimo

Early dealings with the Italian factory involved deliveries using their own vehicles

5
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TYRES

Pete 'PK' Davies won three production titles on the big Laverda – and a racing legend was created

[Laverda], Luciano Zuccarelli the commercial manager, designer Luciano Zen, PR man Hans Blomquist and spares manager Georgio Trevisan. I said the first thing we've got to do with the bike is put the price up [from their current models]. That went down like a lead balloon. We also needed the bike supplied with the camshafts, pistons and exhaust system we'd worked on. And then I showed them the power figures we'd got; Luciano Zen was particularly interested, because I'd worked closely with him and he was impressed.

"Massimo asked what we would suggest as a name and I said: 'Jota'. He said: 'What the hell is a Jota?' So I told him it was a rapid gypsy dance, danced in triple time."

Richard takes up the story: "The board did what we wanted and the first Jota went out in September 1975. We said everyone knew the Manx Norton was silver, so they decided the first Jota would also be silver. By late 1977, they'd had enough of silver – I think they'd run out of paint. So they painted it a beautiful gold – but after that, they went on to orange and everything was orange after that. Now everyone knows the Jota is orange."

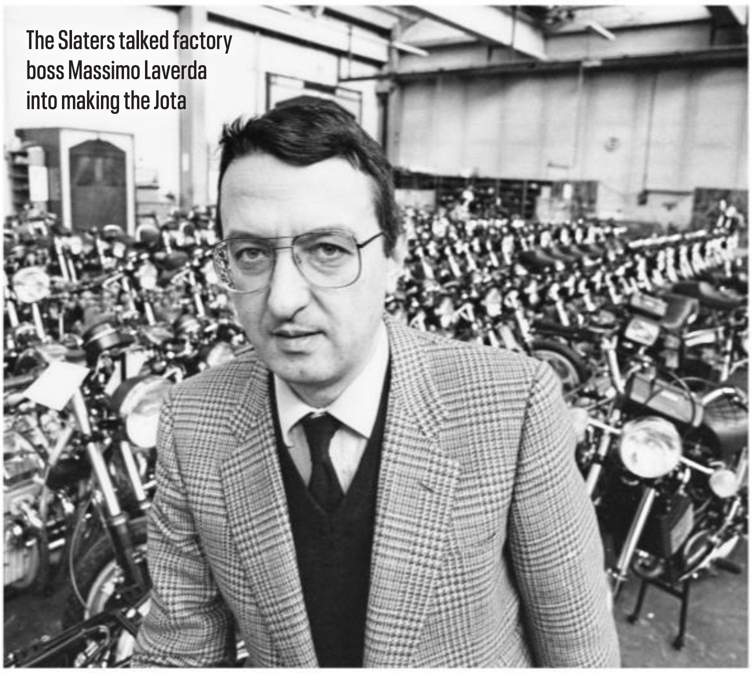
The bikes came over to Richard and Roger with the exhaust fitted, although the brothers had to make the silencers. "But it had the camshafts and the pistons already fitted from their race department," says Richard. "That's where Luciano Zen came in," chips in Roger, the pair finishing each others' sentences like an old married couple. "They already had the 4C cams," Roger continues, "and they were carrying out development all the time, so they had the high-compression pistons – the parts were already available."

It was a true partnership, with the Slaters doing the development work and the factory making the specialist parts. I ask what they got out of the deal, given that they did so much work. "More sales!" laughs Roger.

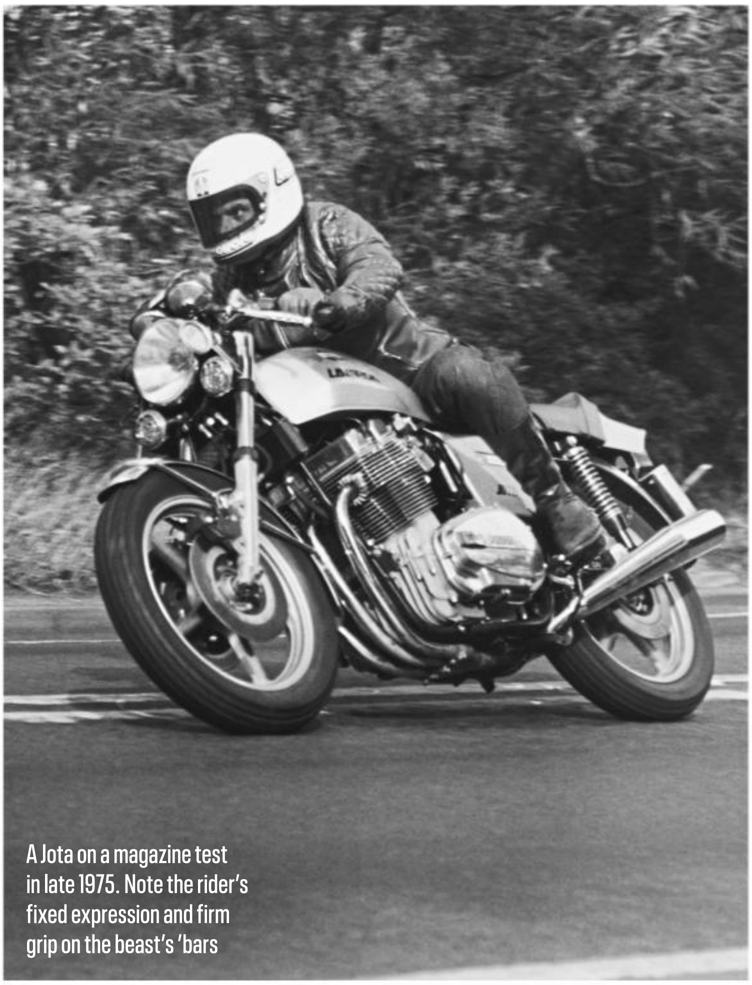
Realising we're getting ahead of ourselves, I ask the brothers to rewind and explain how the story began – with Vincents, I've heard. "Yes, in the beginning, four of us worked on Vincents, building engines," says Roger. "And then the Egli frames came along and we ran out of space, so we bought this place." Richard ditched his day job, servicing and selling lorries, to join the team in 1970. "I gave up my house and a good job and came down here to work for ten bob a week," says Richard. "So Roger gets the blame for starting this.

"We were getting a lot of parts made in Italy for the Vincent engine," he continues. "We did this via an Italian broker called Dario. We sent him a part and he knew where to get it made – pistons, idlers, etc. They were always perfect and cheap. Eventually, we decided we needed a new engine and I asked him if he knew anyone. He came back saying he'd found a little company out at Breganze, so I piled a Vincent engine in the back of a Citroen Safari and drove down there, where I met Massimo [Laverda]."

After three weeks, Roger went back to see how they were getting on. "I was really impressed. They were expecting me, and a secretary who had a view of the entrance came out to welcome me. Then I saw Massimo, and his advice was to forget the Vincent.


The Slaters talked factory boss Massimo Laverda into making the Jota

'I showed Laverda the power figures we'd got. They were impressed'


A Jota on a magazine test in late 1975. Note the rider's fixed expression and firm grip on the beast's 'bars

The Slaters' Collington Works in Herefordshire – a long way from Breganze

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He said we had to move to a modern motor and took me to a big building at the back of the factory where they were developing the new triple.

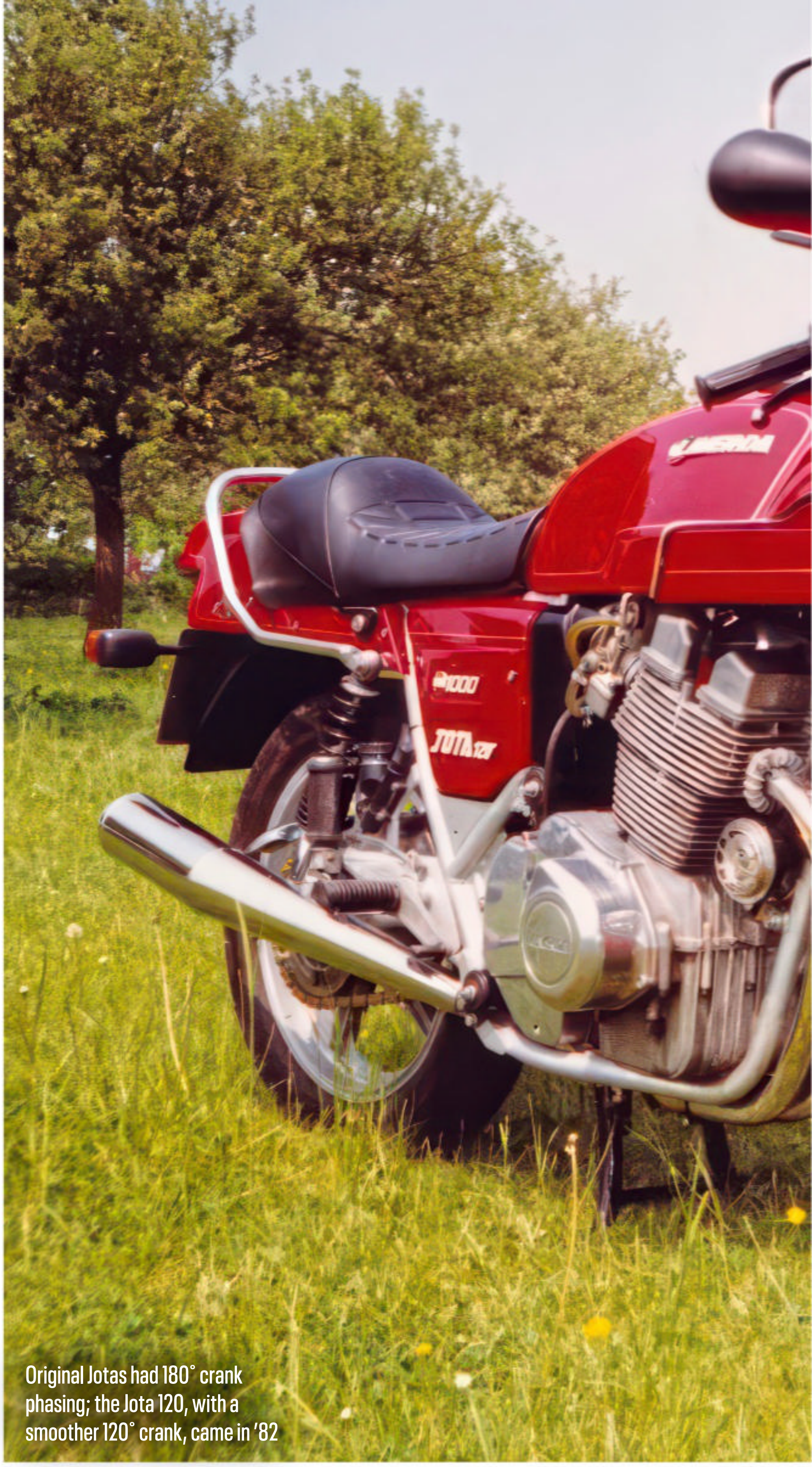
"This was an early one, with the drive on the left-hand side. It was still being tested, so in the meantime he said he would ship us some Laverda 750s to sell." In fact, Roger and Richard fetched the first bikes in their own vehicles – but had to bring them in as kits to avoid the 33% import tax. "The frame and cycle parts came on one invoice, with the engines on a separate one," says Roger. "We advertised them as a kit, but assembled the whole machine for customers."

Eventually the 1000cc triple arrived – and Roger immediately saw the potential to modify it for racing. "We hooked it up to a Heenan and Froude dyno with a big long chain from the final drive. A bigger diameter collector box made a big difference, but then the centre stand wouldn't fit, so we put it in the press and made it oval-shape and it still worked, which many have copied since. This was the 3CE – E for England."

'It was going so well, we fitted 4C cams and high-comp pistons'

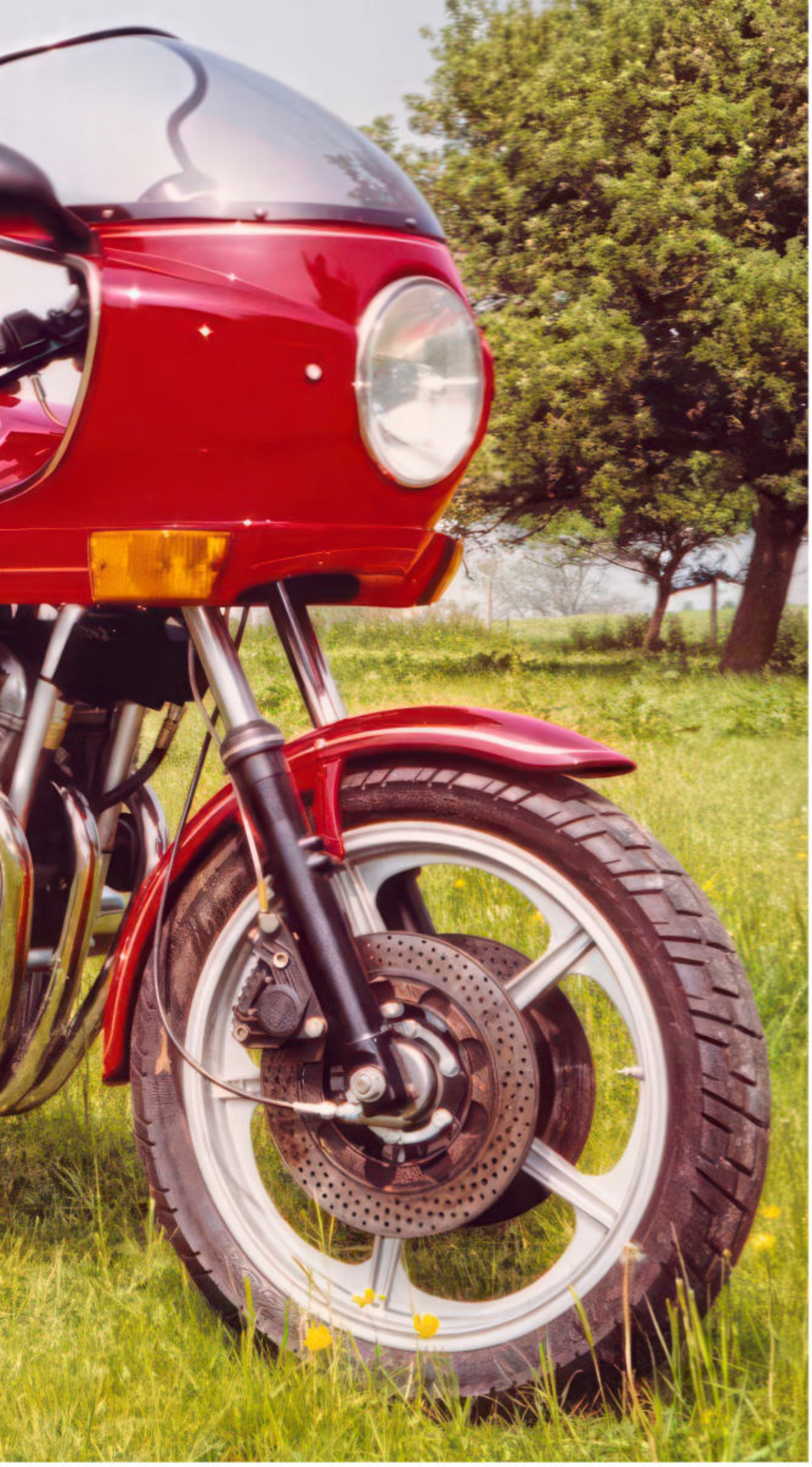
Next, the brothers chucked out the air cleaner, then tweaked the carburation, then the silencer – all using the dyno to test their work. "It was going so well that we fitted the 4C cams and the high-compression pistons," says Roger. "That took it to Jota spec [making 91bhp]." That's when they realised it should be a different model and set off for the board meeting.

Once the Jotas started arriving, the brothers quickly realised that it would make a fearsome race bike. "We were lucky, because the Avon/*Bike* Production Championship came along and we thought we could do a few mods to the Jota to make it more raceable," adds Roger. "We put a slug in the front forks to raise them up to get more ground clearance and then just put the rear shocks on the hardest setting. The rules



Original Jotas had 180° crank phasing; the Jota 120, with a smoother 120° crank, came in '82

Richard Slater and Laverda dealer Geoff Daryn ponder a 125 trail bike at the Breganze factory



PK Davies leaving everyone else behind in the Avon series at Snetterton in 1976

didn't allow you to alter anything visually on the bike."

The results were extraordinary. "We won the championship with Peter 'PK' Davies riding for us in '76, '77 and '79," says Richard. "In '78 he broke his neck testing tyres, which is why we didn't win then."

Despite the ride-height adjustments, those famous engine cases were causing problems on track, though. "The left primary chain case had a dome nut sticking out, which we replaced with a flat one to make it flush with the casing – but PK just wore the frame tube instead," says Richard.

There was a problem with the right-hand side, too. "The cover stuck out, so we ground it away – but the scrutineers said we couldn't do that," says Roger. "So all we did was go through scrutineering with a complete cover, then Pete would lean it over in corners and grind it away. But then it touched down on the flywheel, so I took that off and machined a big chamfer on it. That helped. Half of the 10mm nuts were also ground away but the scrutineers couldn't see inside."

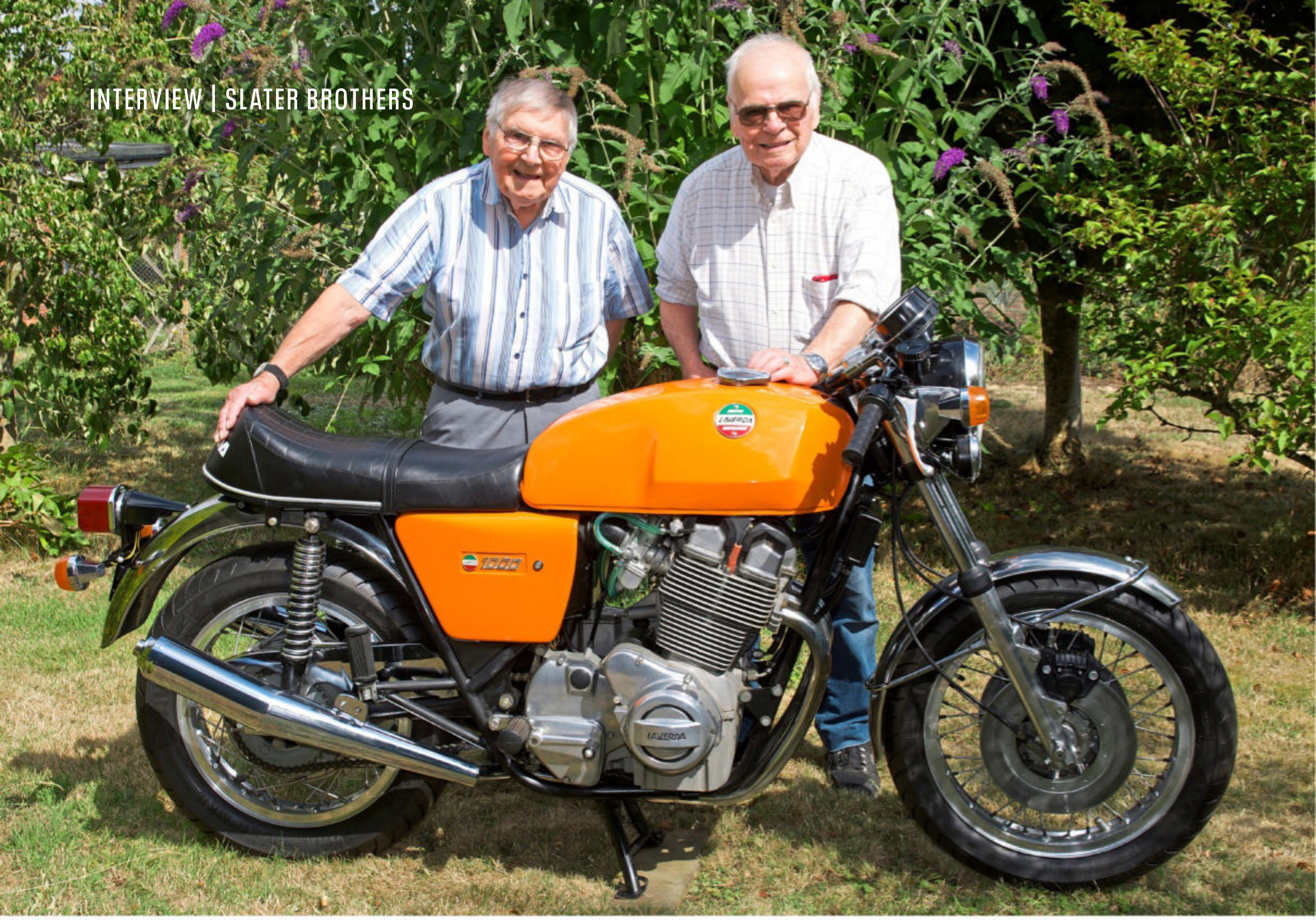
And the engine proved to be remarkably robust. "At Brands Hatch in one race, Pete knew if he changed gear on the run-in to the line he'd lose to a big Kawasaki, so he revved it to 9000rpm," says Roger. "The factory said the limit was 7800rpm, although for maximum power it was 8200rpm. I took the head off to see if the pistons had touched the valves, but there was nothing.

"I passed the information onto Luciano and he agreed that my assessment was correct. It was marvellous working with Luciano. We couldn't speak the same language apart from bikes – I knew the Italian for pistons, conrods etc so we could communicate. He always shouted when I came into his office, because he knew there would be some excitement on the way."

The relationship with Luciano proved beneficial in other ways. He saw how successful they were at selling Laverdas – "I think at one stage, we sold more bikes here in England than in the rest of Europe put together," says Richard – so he offered them the job of setting up a US importership. "But importing Laverdas into the US was never as successful as the UK," says Roger, who stayed in the States and has lived there ever since.

Back home, the Jota was getting a mixed reaction from the press – and the Slaters were not impressed with *Bike* magazine. "Hmm..." growls Roger. "I lent a journalist called Jerry Clayton a brand new 3C and told him I wanted the oil changed after 400 to 500 miles. Next thing I heard was that this bloody Laverda seized on the M1. I thought: 'They don't seize up,' so I got the bike back and examined the engine. It was piston seizure – it had melted and was bright blue. And there was no oil in it at all – there could have been cobwebs in there. The bloody idiot had done 14 or 15 miles with no oil in it.

"An independent engineer said it was obvious it had been run without oil for a considerable distance and done extreme damage. I sent *Bike* the bill. The same journalist wrote: 'Have you ever bitten into an apple and found it full of maggots – that's what I'm riding today'. He also said: 'It took two men and a boy to pull the clutch in and it vibrated like a bastard'." Forty years later and it feels like Roger hasn't even begun to



ABOVE The brothers (Roger's on the right) with Richard's 3C, the model that they realised could become so much more - the Jota

'We've just made history – that's the fastest production bike there is'

forgive Jerry Clayton. "No," he confirms. "We never got on with him."

They had a few issues with the journalist John Nutting too, though most of those weren't his fault. "He took a Jota to MIRA [the famous test track in Nuneaton]," says Roger. "That was a bit of a mistake, because it was a machine from the TT races and it had a close-ratio 'box and a taller tyre on the back – we hadn't had the time to change it. First of all, he tried to do a standing quarter and burned out the clutch, then when we changed the clutch he decided to get a top speed.

"I was in the timing box and he went one way at 139mph. Then he turned round and did 141mph the other way. He parked up and came in to see the results and said: 'Bloody hell, we've just made history – that's the fastest production bike there is.' The problem was that the big tyre made it weave – and he bitched about that."

Owners caused problems, too – usually by trying to create Jotas. "I was always in the office," says Roger, "and customers would phone up and say something like 'my Laverda isn't running right'. I'd say we could sort that out, then ask them what they'd modified – and they'd say: 'I put the latest air cleaner in, and state of the art camshafts made by so and so in the States, and somebody else's ignition system...'

"I'd stop them and say: 'Ah, I've got the answer – I know how to fix your bike. Just take all that crap off, put it back to how the manufacturer built it and your problems will be cured. Most of them didn't want to hear that, but some of them could see the sense of it."

We've finished our quiche and I know the brothers have other appointments, so I ask Roger to try and sum up the Jota experience. "Well, I wouldn't have moved to the US without the Laverdas, and it was all great fun and a great adventure. We met some amazing people – we're still very close with Pete [their racer], who came over about three weeks ago as he lives down in Utah in the US.

"All in all, it worked out extremely well."

It most certainly did. CB

LEFT A line-up of later Laverdas at Collingwood in the '80s. Now it's someone's house

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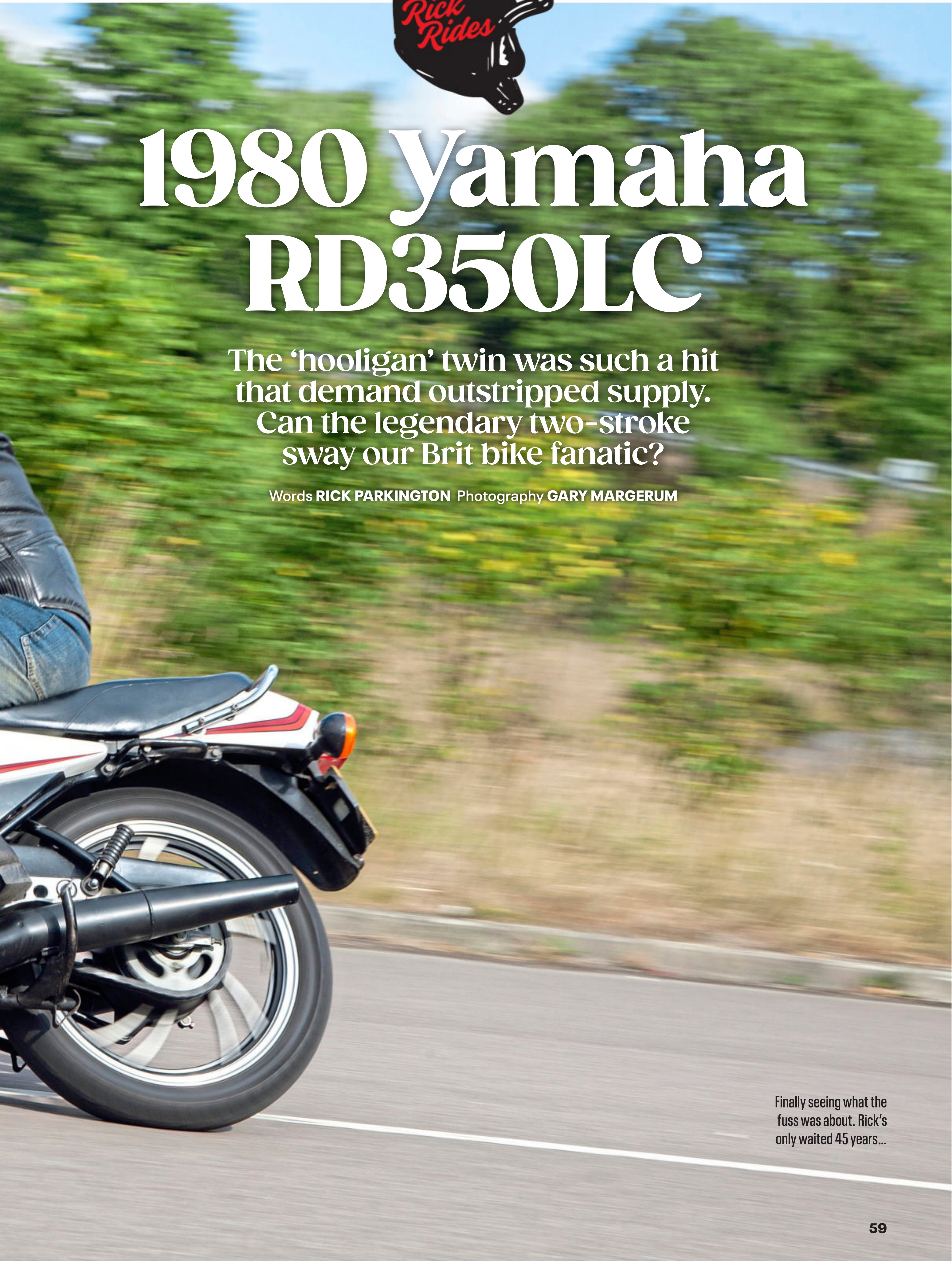


Rick Rides

1980 Yamaha RD350LC

The 'hooligan' twin was such a hit that demand outstripped supply. Can the legendary two-stroke sway our Brit bike fanatic?

Words **RICK PARKINGTON** Photography **GARY MARGERUM**

Finally seeing what the fuss was about. Rick's only waited 45 years...

I think I'm going to enjoy this one. I like two-strokes and when I was starting out, the recently released LC Yamahas were at the top of the tree. My RD400-owning uncle pre-ordered the liquid-cooled 350 when they were first announced. He loved it and kept it immaculate – it even lived indoors. At 17, I came close to buying one, and later bought and sold half of one, but despite all that I've never actually ridden an LC. Now's my chance...

First impression is that the RD350LC feels instantly familiar. Considering its reputation as a bit of a hooligan, the Yamaha has such a comfortable and ergonomic layout that it seems to fit as happily as your favourite leathers. Reaching down for the choke on the right carb, I give it a kick and it burbles straight into life with that so-familiar irregular bubbly-bop exhaust note from its standard silencers. But flick the throttle grip and it eagerly turns into a crisp and purposeful rasp, like a zipper being pulled. Clutch in, engage first and off we go, pondering that I'm not the only one looking forward to this test – editor Mike had smiled when he said: "The fun starts about 7000rpm..."

Well, I'd argue that the fun starts at 5500 – this seems to be the point where those bees buzzing about in the attractive satin-black expansion chambers are let loose to swarm. But even below that, the 350 still pulls acceptably. It's got an eager feel to it – ready to go but waiting patiently, without making itself a nuisance. That's good, because with water cooling it should be allowed to warm up before any hanky-panky starts.

At 5500rpm it takes off rapidly and keeps building until – and maybe over – the redline. It's easy to see why this was so impressive and such a big hit in 1980. The 350 class still seemed to echo with the thudding of British four-stroke singles, with Japan having veered toward 400s in the mid-'70s – but that lifted them into the 351-600cc insurance class, making a high-performance two-stroke 350 an attractive proposition.

On top of that, in standard form at least, the LC feels very manageable to ride. Yes, it's quick – but it's not out of control. We all thought 'RD' meant race-developed but current theory suggests the more prosaic 'R: reed valve, D: twin cylinder'. Yamaha used 'D' for twins, although 'R' was already used for piston-ported 350s, so I'm not sure.

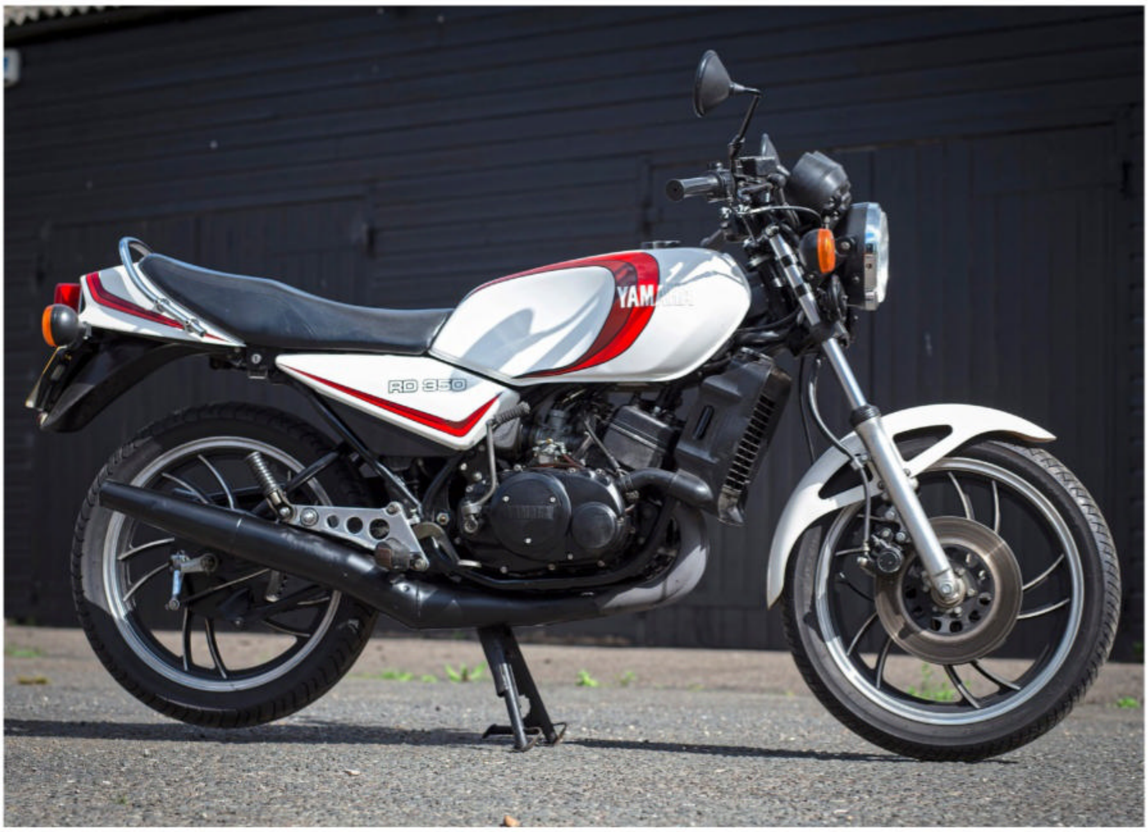
Either way, while the Elsie is clearly a road bike, Yamaha twins had certainly benefited from race development going back to the TD1 of 1966. But it wasn't until after the LC's time that it became more race dominated, when track styling became almost obligatory on anything with sports pretensions.

So I see the RD350LC as among the last of its kind; designed to thrill but not forgetting that most owners would need to ride it to work and take a (possibly more tolerant than enthusiastic) passenger on the back. If you wanted a café racer, Stan Stephens would open up the ports and you could send your Access card to Mel Lemoto to buy anything from Ace bars to a full ally tank, race seat and TZ fairing combo – but as standard, it was laid out more like a sports tourer.

The well-balanced semi-upright riding position makes the bike both comfortable and easy to ride in a relaxed manner, as well as being ideal for popping it up on the back wheel. No, I don't… but we're all well aware that in their day these and other strokers spent a fair bit of time on their hind legs. The LC's

RIGHT The trick is to ignore the first half of the tacho...

FAR RIGHT It's a hooligan with a practical touch: hanger keeps the rider's heels off the buzzing pipes



RIGHT The Elsie's light weight and neutral handling mean confident cornering

LEFT Easy to see why Yamaha keep going back to this paint scheme - it's a true classic

‘It’s easy to see why the LC was so impressive and such a big hit in 1980’

power delivery is ideal for such shenanigans. It builds quickly and exponentially, but it doesn't all come in with a vicious bang that can put you over backwards. You can moderate it with the twistgrip and I'd guess that controllability was a big part of the LC's secret.

But there is also the confidence-inspiring handling. It's light and neutral enough that you don't have to drive it through bends, you just follow your eyes round. The suspension does its job well enough – the only negative is a slight back-end twitch crossing the white line while cranked over, but it isn't much and may be down to tyres. Braking seems well up to the job too. Used to older bikes, I have a different outlook to anyone used to one-finger modern stoppers, but I remember 1980s sliding calipers and these feel pretty good. It's probably due to the bike's light weight – the 250 managed with a single disc, so the twin set-up on the 350 is probably more than it really needs. The rear drum is a good backup, too.

Otherwise, the equipment is typical of its time, and Yamaha's push-to-cancel indicator switch was always a blessing. For old time's sake, I try starting the bike the way my uncle used to – bump starting with a forward jerk of the hips in first gear. It looked cool when he did it, perhaps less so in my case. It works so well, I carry on this way for the rest of the test (it saves me forgetting to fold up the footrest to clear the kickstart).

With its easy but ample performance and manageable handling, it's easy to see why the Yamaha Pro Am racing series was so successful at spawning future stars. Certainly the LC's nimble handling represented a positive change. Japanese frames had been less successful than their engines and I think there's a simple reason. When critics observed that some of the LC's merits were

RIGHT The smell, sound and smoke are as big a part of the LC experience as its performance

The road to the RD350

1955 Yamaha's first motorcycle, the YAS1, is a frank copy of the DKW RT125 single, but the Adler 250 provides the design for their first 250 twin, the YD1 of 1957.

1967 Having exhausted the potential of the Adler-based design, Yamaha put what they had learned into creating their own engine with a horizontally-split crankcase, producing the 348cc R1.

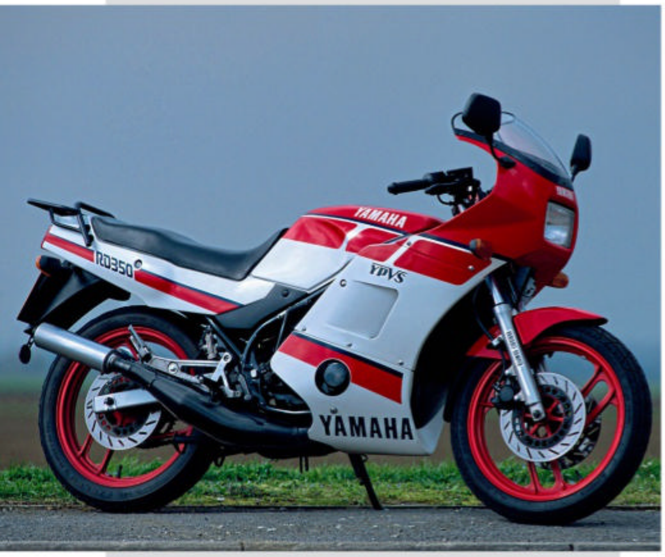
1970 Further innovation sees stroke reduced on the R5 model, giving the well-oversquare 64 x 54 dimension, retained thereafter. But it is the adoption of reed-valve technology on the RD350 of 1973 that unleashes true race-developed performance.

1976 The RD400 model, with its larger capacity, coffin tank and long-stroke (64 x 62) proves very popular and provides a much broader spread of power from its near-square engine.

1980 Just preceded by its 250cc sibling, the RD350LC is launched. Lighter and faster than the 400, UK pre-order demand so outstrips supply that a free Bell helmet is offered to compensate for delay.

1983 The RD350 YPVS replaces the LC. Its 'Power Valve' varies exhaust port timing for better low-speed power; bhp is increased and handling improved. More track styled, a cockpit fairing is fitted.

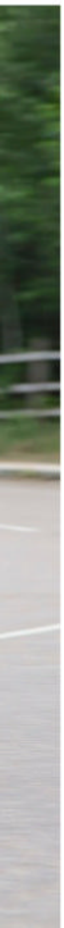
1986 The RD350F2 takes the race concept further with a full fairing. Post-1990 twin-headlight models are made in Brazil and less highly regarded, but emissions legislation kills off all RD350s in 1995.



The later RD350F YPVS packed a claimed 62bhp, a race fairing, lairy speedblock paint… and a sensible rack

BELOW Rick en route to doing a wheelie outside the local chippy… well, possibly

‘It burbles into life with that so-familiar irregular bubbly-bop exhaust note’



LEFT Black finish on engine, radiator and pipes adds to the Yamaha’s menacing image

LEFT Twin discs were cutting-edge in 1980 and Rick found they still do the business

copied from older designs – Scott made water-cooled two-stroke twins before World War I and Vincent pioneered a ‘monoshock’ design well before WWII – they missed the point that copying and improving on other designs had always happened; it’s evolution.

But what nobody wanted to copy was the labour-intensive manufacturing methods that were strangling the British industry. Rooted in pre-war days of cheap manpower, the virtual hand-building of frames – jig brazing tubes into expensively cast and machined lugs – was definitely out, so Japan looked to automated production involving welded steel pressings. That technology, hitherto mostly used on cars, scooters and mopeds, took some time to get right – especially given the weight of the big multi-cylinder engines Japan produced. But they got it right with the LC.

The press loved it back then. I remember one tester saying he wished he’d found a featherbed Norton to beat through the twisties. Bloody cheek! I was 16 and a Norton owner – a 500cc Dominator project I was preparing for my full licence the following year, and then we’d see if Yamaha or Norton made the best frames…

But I failed my test and came close to switching sides. With a three-month wait for another test, I needed a road 250 and despite my loyalties I was drawn to a year-old white-with-blue-stripe RD250LC in a local dealer. It looked fantastic – and remember this was

ABOVE The lure of this symbol of '80s rebellion ensures some high-revving prices today

SPECIFICATION | YAMAHA RD350LC

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION Type Water-cooled 180° parallel-twin two-stroke **Dimensions** 64 x 54mm **Capacity** 347cc **Power** 47bhp at 8500rpm **Compression ratio** 6.2:1 **Carburation** Twin Mikuni 26mm **Clutch** Wet multiplate **Gearbox** Six speed **CHASSIS Frame** Tubular steel cradle **Front suspension** 32mm telescopic fork with hydraulic damping **Rear suspension** Monoshock with adjustable hydraulic shock absorber **Brakes** Front: Twin 267mm hydraulic disc with single piston calipers. Rear: 158mm single-leading-shoe drum **Wheels** Cast alloy spoked **Tyres** Front: 3.00 x 18. Rear: 3.25 x 18 **DIMENSIONS Wheelbase** 1365mm (53.7in) **Weight** 149kg (328lb) **PERFORMANCE Top speed** 115mph

the first 'official' 100mph 250, so fast that politicians and worriers were already drafting legislation to curb L-platers down to 125cc. Having been forced to ride a 50cc for a year, a 100mph 250 was irresistible. But to buy the Yamaha I'd need to sell my Norton. I was at the crossroads, and after much soul-searching I kept the Norton (and bought a cheap banger XS250 instead).

I've often wondered where I'd be if I'd taken the other path. Maybe I'd have stayed with Japanese bikes and had an easy life, but instead I took the Devil's road, selling my soul for a life of occasional joyous rides separated by long hours of endless toil in dingy workshops, forever taunted by mechanical demons...

But now I've finally laid the ghost, I think I made the right decision – for me anyway. After 45 years' wait, it's only about half an hour before I'm feeling ready to hand the Yamaha back. There's nothing wrong with it – in fact, that's the trouble. The LC is easy to ride fast, it's good at it, but that feels like the top and tail. When I was 17, classic or modern, it was all about the numbers on the dial, but riding much older bikes teaches you that speed is a mix of skill, handling, braking and power – and not power alone. I look for a different riding experience, more of a challenge.

The LC was intended for young blades out to prove themselves – and many of the lads in those Pro Am races did exactly that. I have great fun ripping up and down through the gears on the LC, but after that I can't think of much else to do. On my own, anyway. The two-stroke heyday was all about scratching around with your mates – and that's where any bike with searing acceleration will really shine, slicing and dicing to prove yourself among like-minded nutters.

Maybe that was the grand plan. The LC wasn't intended as a bike for life, it was a stepping stone for young riders, a well-balanced way to learn about speed relatively safely and set you up ready to buy a bigger bike. Looked at that way it's a top scorer, and as a classic it's certainly up there – a great looker, easy to maintain, exciting and fun to ride. And if you've got a bunch of mates with the same ideas in mind, you'll have a brilliant time. CB

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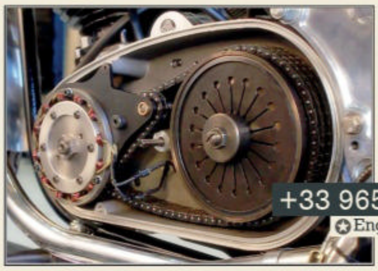

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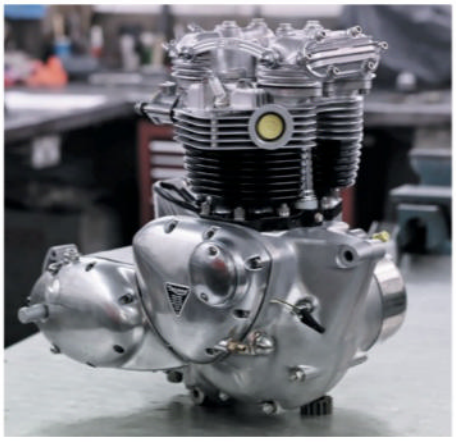

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Who's who on the big stage

From the world of racing: Steve Parrish, John McGuinness, Dean Harrison, Jenny Tinmouth and Steve Plater ▶ TV's Henry Cole, Allen Millyard and Guy 'Skid' Willison ▶ Plus: Motorcycle journalists Emma Franklin, Saffron Wilson and Rachael Clegg

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Stars on stage

Don't miss any of the action on the main stage in the Britannia Suite. Like the whole event, it's free to get in (though it does get packed), with six entertaining onstage sessions to enjoy over the weekend

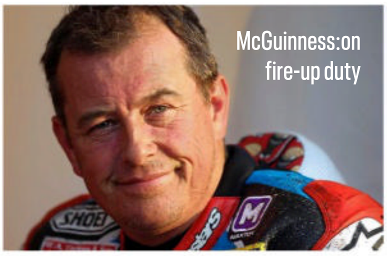
First up, at 10.15am on both mornings, is journalist and artist Rachael Clegg, perhaps best known for her *TT Milestones* calendar and book. Sharing the stage with Rachael will be the fastest ever woman around the TT course, Jenny Tinmouth.

Jenny, who is also a film stunt rider and former BSB regular, will be sharing some fascinating insights into a life lived at full throttle. She'll be joined by *MCN* editor Emma Franklin and journalist Saffron Wilson, who'll be lifting the lid on what goes into creating the world's favourite weekly motorcycle paper.

Steve Plater takes over the stage at 11am, to introduce the irrepressible Henry Cole and his TV troupe of Allen Millyard and Guy 'Skid' Willison. They'll host a mix of machine fire-ups, an update on the restoration of the Norton Nemesis V8 – and on their attempt to better the current V8 motorcycle speed record of 136mph on the bike – as well as exclusive previews of Henry's latest online project, themotorbikeshow.com

After a quick break for lunch, Henry and friends will be back on the main stage with an extended show, featuring Honda Racing UK riders and TT legends John McGuinness and Dean Harrison. They'll be revealing all about life inside the race paddock and some of their greatest races.

Henry will also be sharing footage – including some of the out-takes – from some recent shows. It'll be a great watch – leading to the finale of the session, when John and Dean fire up a couple of their race bikes.



McGuinness: on fire-up duty

Race tales from Dean Harrison

Jenny Tinmouth: TT hero onstage

Norton double act

Two **Norton** prototypes are set to wow the crowds at Museum Live

The original 1987 rotary racer and (inset) Alan getting his first taste of the V8

There's a double dose of extreme Norton at Museum Live, with an update on the Nemesis V8 restoration project from engineer extraordinaire Allen Millyard. Allen will be reporting on progress during his twice-daily live appearances on the main stage, where the 1500cc Nemesis will be on display – and hopefully fired up. Already, the bike has recorded a top speed of 110mph with the engine pulling at 8000rpm – and Allen is confident there's plenty more to come. Fingers crossed for the record.

Brian Crighton and test rider Bob Rowley from the factory's original rotary

Henry Cole will bring his unique brand of motorcycling passion - and show some TV out-takes

WORDS GEZ KANE PHOTOGRAPHY BAUER ARCHIVE, HONDA, NMM, MICK DUCKWORTH

racer development team will be available to chat about the rotary race years in the Torque Zone in the museum foyer from 10am to 12 midday, and 2pm to 4pm on both days. They'll be bringing the original 1987 prototype racer – a truly remarkable machine.

Brian was a service engineer at Norton's Shenstone factory when the new rotaries were attracting orders from UK police forces. Convinced the 85bhp twin-rotor air-cooled engine was capable of much more, he persuaded management to let him experiment with tuning a crashed police bike. The results have become part of Norton folklore, with Brian's makeshift racer pumping out over 120bhp and hitting 170mph.

While power wasn't a problem, the handling of the converted police bike rolling chassis certainly was. Test rider Bob Rowley christened the machine 'Waltzing Walter' because of its wayward behaviour under full power. But the bike was the start of something special and Norton rotaries would go on to rack up success after success – notably at the TT – until changes in racing regulations effectively outlawed the bikes in 1995.

Don't miss the chance to get a close-up look at the bike that started the rotary revolution – and talk to two of the men who created it.

October 25-26
FREE EVENT

Testing, testing...

Head out into the roads of rural Warwickshire on the latest bikes from **BSA** and **Royal Enfield**

Don't just come to look - you can put yourself in the hot seat, with both BSA and Royal Enfield offering test rides over the weekend. You'll have to book at the BSA and Royal Enfield road test stands outside and show your licence, but what an opportunity to check out the best of the retro classic scene.

BSA will be bringing their new-for-2025 Scrambler and Bantam models for Museum Live visitors to sample. The Scrambler is based on the popular and successful 652cc Gold Star single and brings a dash of off-road style to the party, without sacrificing anything in terms of performance and practicality. Come on down and see what all the fuss is about.

And, bringing back the most popular model name in BSA's illustrious history, the new 334cc Bantam looks set to inspire a whole new generation of motorcyclists. It blends accessibility, fun and rugged simplicity with a tempting introductory price tag of just £3499. Could this be your next bike? Make your mind up at Museum Live.

Royal Enfield have been in the retro/classic market for a long time now. Their classic-style 650 twins and 350 singles have won plenty of hearts among riders who value traditional motorcycling virtues like simplicity, character, reliability and old-fashioned good value. They'll be bringing a truckload of their latest models to win over a few more fans.

So don't forget your (full motorcycle) licence and riding kit - and make sure you sign up early for the chance to sample some of the latest offerings from two of the best-known names in the retro motorcycle business. Bear in mind that test ride spaces are limited - test rides will be on a first come, first served basis throughout both days.

Have a ride on BSA's latest retro models: the Scrambler and Bantam

Loud, lairy and live...

Cover your ears – the top fuel drag bikes are back in action

Drag yourself away from the food court at lunchtime and get an earful of the drag bike fire-up session in the museum's Fountain Courtyard, hosted by former GP ace Steve Parrish. Two-wheeled stars of the quarter-mile strip including the legendary Hobbit, Olympus and Nero are among the machines being run.

Builder and rider John Hobbs made the 1700cc twin Weslake-engined Hobbit the fastest drag bike in Europe in the mid-'70s, following his previous bike - the supercharged Triumph twin, Olympus. Both machines reside in the NMM collection, as does George Brown's 1000cc Vincent, Nero, which was setting records almost two decades earlier.

Drag racing was big news in the mid-to-late '70s, attracting big crowds, big-name riders, big money and some of the most innovative and imaginative engineering in the motorcycle world. If you were around at the time, you'll know - and you'll want to relive the experience of the full sound and fury these awesome machines provide. If you weren't, you certainly won't want to miss the opportunity to sample just a little bit of what you missed.

John Hobbs' Hobbit will be fired up

Talk the torque

Chat with the experts or get a book signed in the all-new Torque Zones in the museum foyer

Whether you've got a query about machine dating, want to know the best tool to use for a job, or want to know a little more about military bikes or how the museum bikes are restored, the Torque Zones are the place to be. Bad Dog Customs, Central Wheel Components, Bournes Powder Coaters, H&H Auctions, *MCN* and the VMC will be in the museum inner foyer, between 8.30am and 5pm, waiting to answer your questions and share specialist knowledge.

Rachael Clegg will be hanging out in the zone too (when she's not on stage) and Liliana Myers, widow of late Hairy Biker Dave Myers, will be on hand to sign copies of her new book.

Military bike guru John Moore will be happy to share his knowledge from 10am to 12 midday and 2pm to 4pm on both days too, as will rotary Norton racer guru Brian Crighton, alongside former Norton test rider Bob Rowley, showing off rotary racer prototype 'Waltzing Walter.' You can also meet the NMM's in-house restoration team the Wall family, and ex-Triumph experimental shop engineer Norman Hyde, from 10am to 12 midday and 2pm to 4pm on both days.

Head to the admissions desk in the foyer to book in for a guided tour of the museum collection by *Classic Bike*'s Rick Parkington. The twice-a-day tours at 10.30am and 2.30pm are a great introduction to the finest collection of British bikes in the world - and great fun.

NATIONAL MOTORCYCLE MUSEUM LIVE
WHERE LEGENDS LIVE ON

Essential information

Date October 25-26 **Museum doors open** 08.30-17.30 **Phone number** 01675 444140 **Website** nationalmotorcyclemuseum.co.uk **Address** The National Motorcycle Museum, Coventry Road, Bickenhill, Solihull, West Midlands B92 0EJ **Location** South of Birmingham, junction 6 of the M42 **Parking** Free for motorcycles, £20 for cars
The food court and licensed bar are open throughout the event

It's all here

From trade stalls to specialist services, an autojumble and experts on hand, here's the full line-up...

***Motor Cycle News*:** Meet editor, two-stroke nut and racer Emma Franklin and find out what it's like to make the world's best-loved biking weekly.

BSA: Get up close to BSA's new Scrambler and Bantam models - and book a test ride at their outside stand in the museum car park.

Royal Enfield: Book a test ride at the company's outside stand and take the chance to check out the rest of the retro range indoors.

Central Wheel Components: Demystify the art of wheel building.

Solo Starters: Fire up a classic racer with ease - with a little help from Solo.

Sealey Tools: Get the job done right with the right tool.

Midlife Classics: Ride home on a classic bike, perhaps?

Andy Tiernan Motorcycles: More tempting deals from the Suffolk classic dealer.

Yeomans Classic Motorcycles: More temptations for those looking to buy a classic bike.

H&H Auctions: Unravel the mystique of the saleroom with a friendly chat.

Bad Dog Paintwork: Your paintwork problems resolved.

Bournes Powder Coaters: All your powder coating queries answered.

The Vintage Motorcycle Club: It's not just for pre-31 machines you know. All bikes 25 years or older are welcome.

Indoor autojumble: Parts, bikes, tools and more - and all under cover.

Food court and bar: Fuel yourself up for the day with the museum's excellent catering offerings.

Museum shop: Books, clothing, tools and much more. Make sure you call in.

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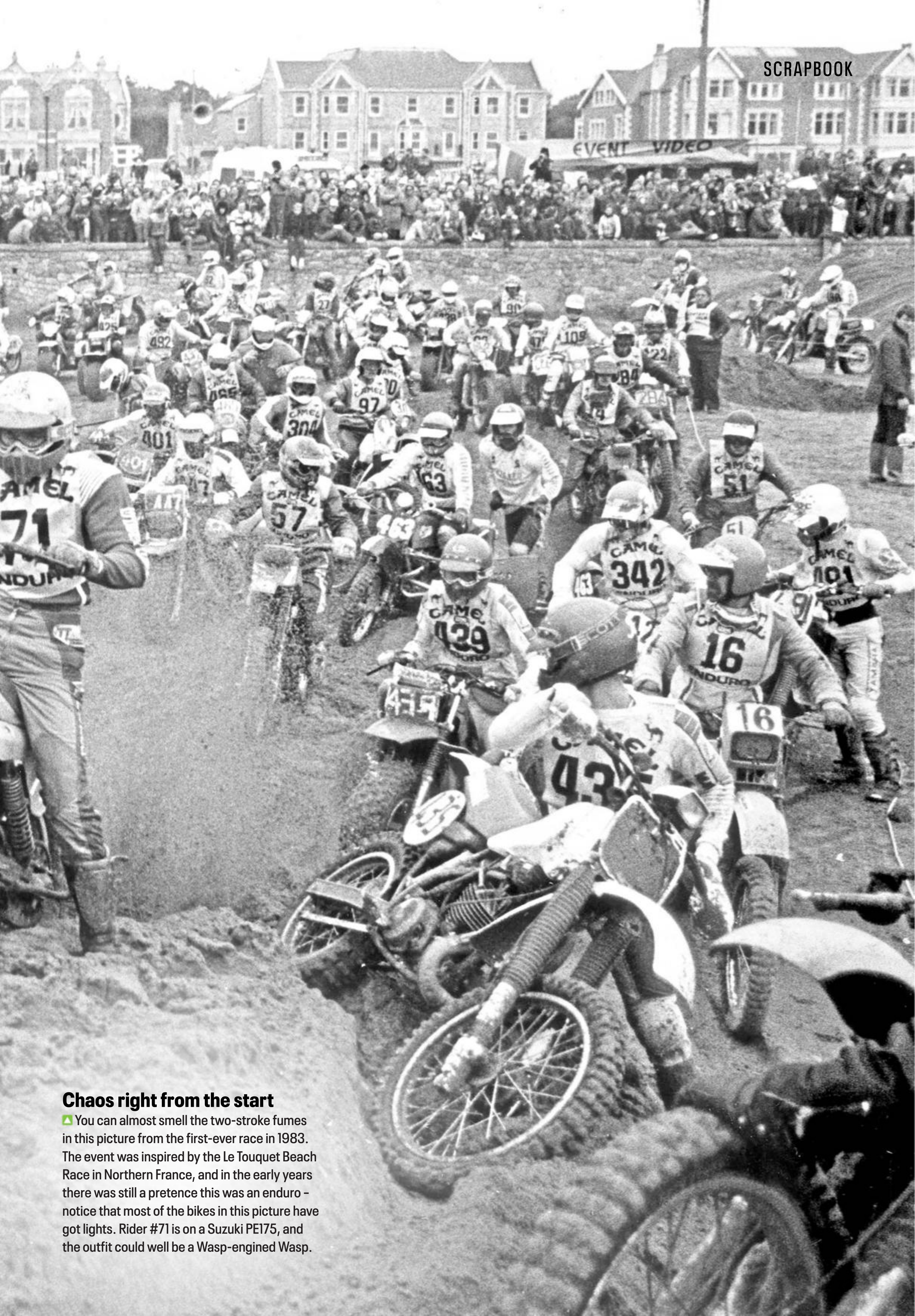
Sand blasting

The **Weston-super-Mare** beach race is one of the hardest events on the British calendar, with 800 starters battling the wild course set against a seaside resort backdrop. Ahead of this year's event in October, we've been digging in our archive

Words **HUGO WILSON** Photography **BAUER ARCHIVE**



Chaos right from the start

You can almost smell the two-stroke fumes in this picture from the first-ever race in 1983. The event was inspired by the Le Touquet Beach Race in Northern France, and in the early years there was still a pretence this was an enduro – notice that most of the bikes in this picture have got lights. Rider #71 is on a Suzuki PE175, and the outfit could well be a Wasp-engined Wasp.

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Showing the way to do it

What do you need to win? "A lot of mates riding," says 1984 winner and former British 125 motocross champion Roger Harvey. "The trick is to get through the queues, so you need people to move over for you and let you past. You'll come up behind them in the queue, tap their back wheel with your front and they turn around. If they know you, they'll lean their bike to one side and you can get past. After the first lap, you'd be in queues four or five times a lap.

"Some people reckon that you needed to gear-up for the straight - but the trouble with that is using taller gearing made getting through the queues and up the dunes harder. Even on motocross gearing [Roger won the race on an air-cooled Yamaha YZ465 two-stroke] it'd do over 100mph, which was scary - especially when it was dropping into ruts - but you got used to it."

That speed down the straight was important, though - especially on the first lap. "You needed to be in the top half-dozen when you got to the first corner, so you got a clear run on the first lap. On the second lap, you'd get to the first jump - which was like a 30-foot high wall - and it'd be a sea of bikes and bodies. From then on, you'd be fighting past the queues. You'd run over a few people, but the sand was very soft with lots of give. It got a bit quieter in the second hour, because a lot of riders stopped for a breather - but it'd pick up again half an hour from the end, because they all wanted to be running at the finish."

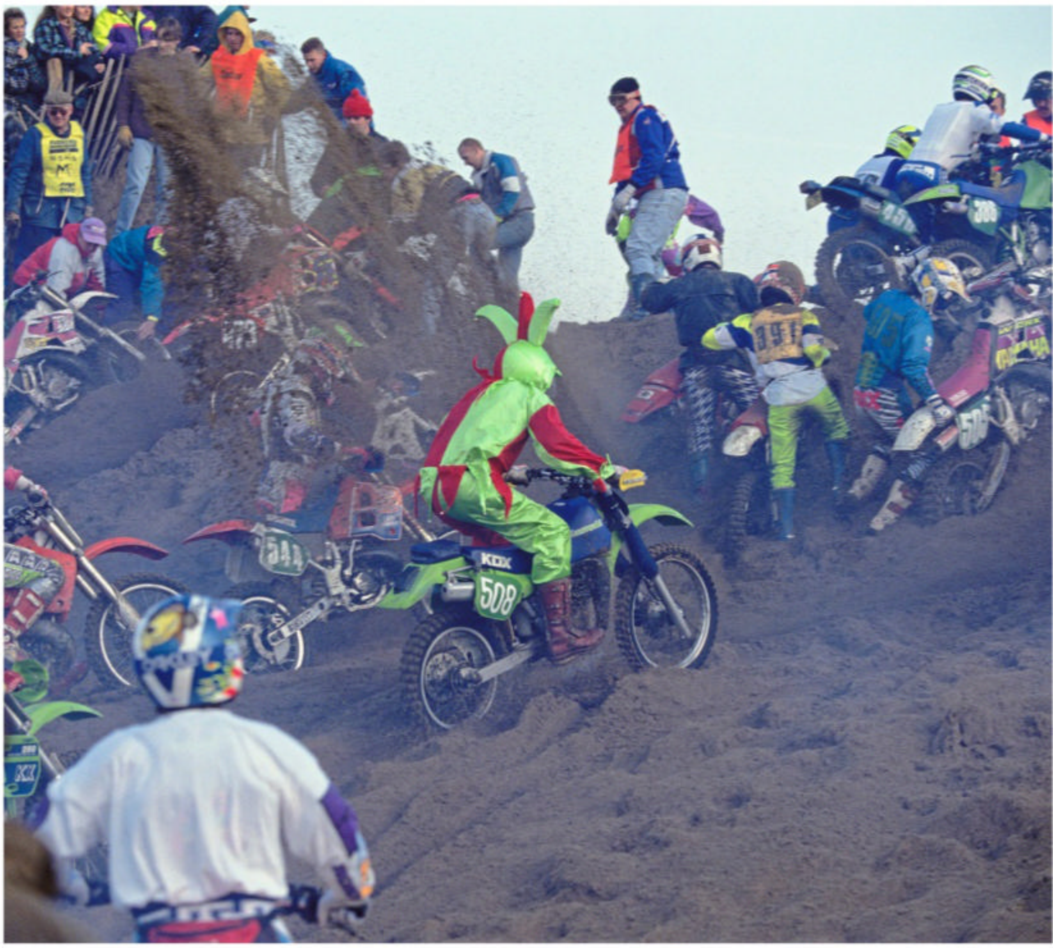
Despite the drama, Roger has fond memories. "It's one of the best events I've ever ridden. It's just having fun on a motorbike - and that's why you started racing bikes."

That looks quite heavy going...

Hard up against the dunes at the west end of the course is a sandy quagmire. It gets more churned and harder to ride as the race progresses. The top riders seem to float on this stage, while the tired clubmen struggle - especially when it comes to the third hour. We can't imagine what it's like on an outfit or a quad.

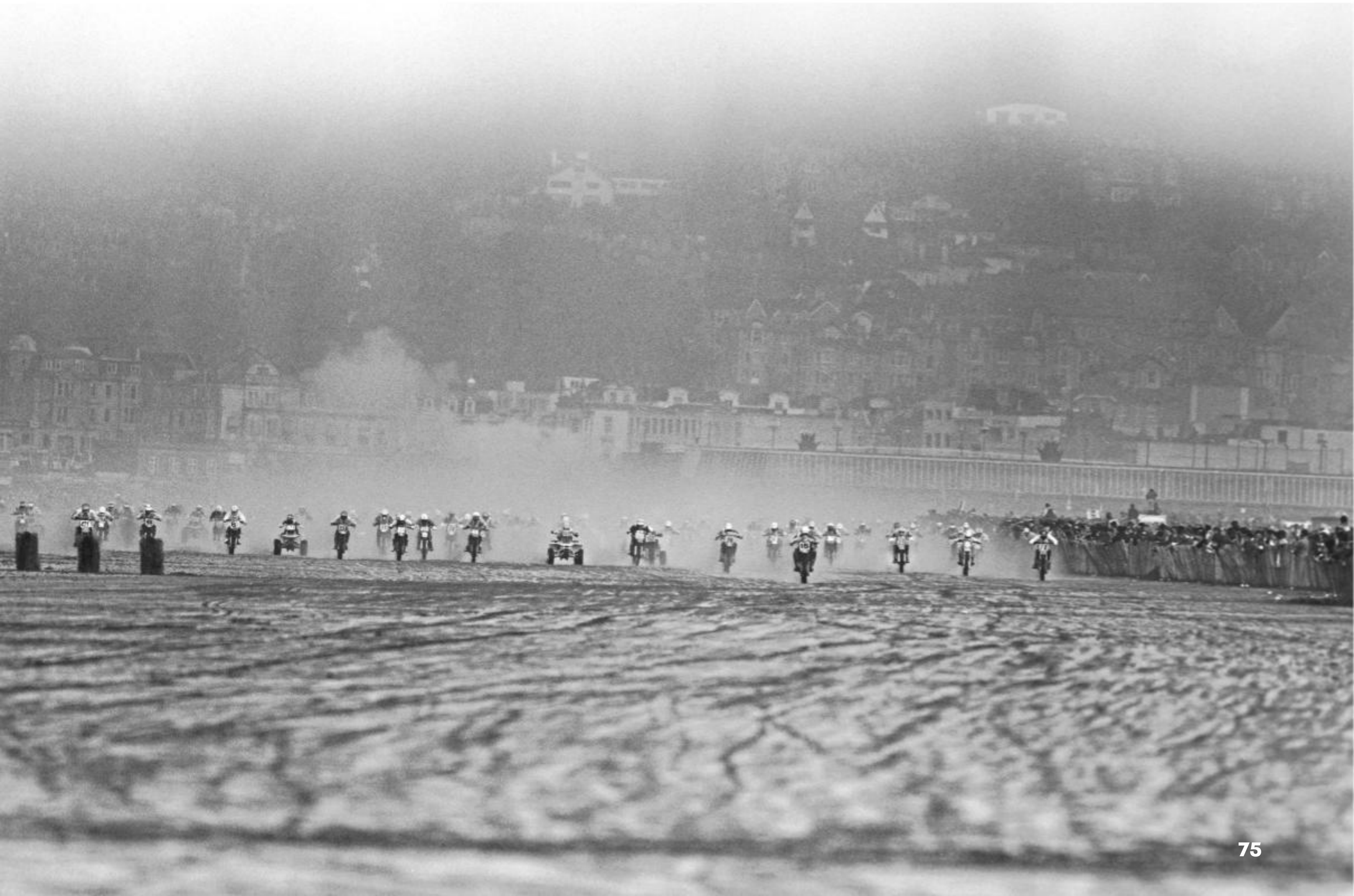
First corner carnage

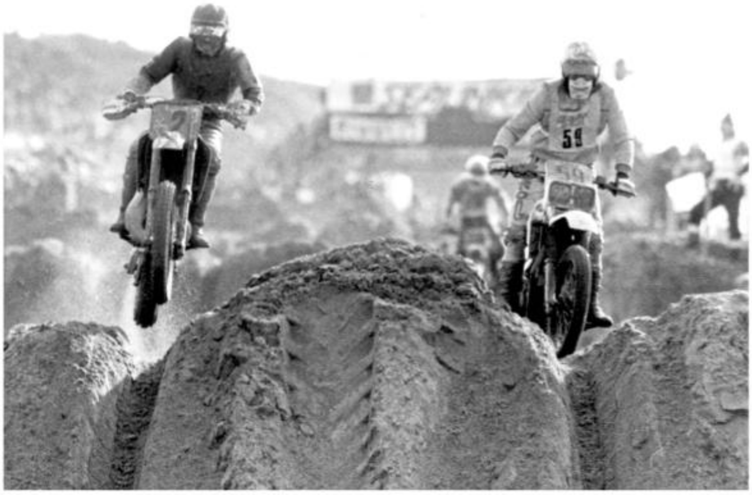
Traffic jams are all part of the experience, and getting through them is critical to maintaining progress. It's a balance between hustling through the melée, occasionally using other riders' feet, legs and bikes for traction, and saying thank you so they don't deliberately baulk you next time round. Fancy dress and silly helmet adornments help the pit crews to identify their riders.



Just gun it off the line

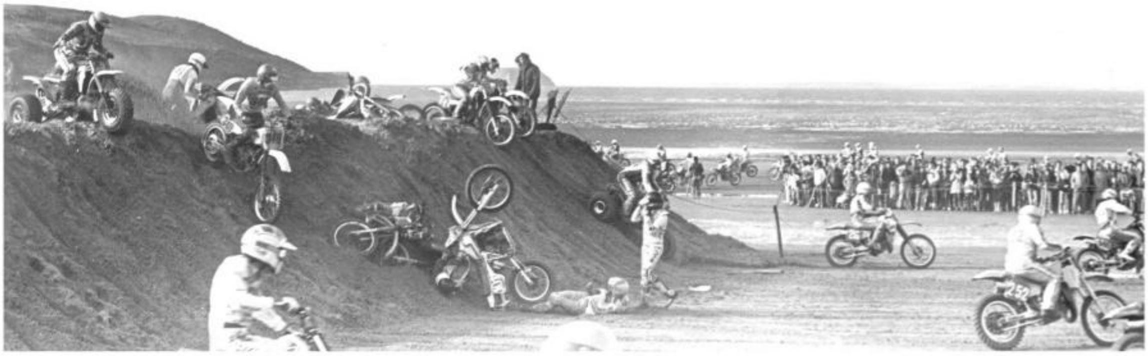
You need a fast start to avoid the mayhem in the dunes on lap one. Quads and sidecars used to race with the solos, but now get their own race on the Saturday. With the tide retreating, the safest line is close to the crowd, furthest from the seashore to avoid soft sand. We're not sure what year this is, or whether that's sea mist or two-stroke fumes obscuring the view of Weston-super-Mare's Victorian seaside architecture.





Weight makes a big difference on the sand

◀ Dave Watson (left) on his way to winning the 1986 race (he'd also won the previous year) aboard a 102kg Honda CR500 with 63bhp. Beside him is Arthur Browning on a Cagiva Elefant 650. Arthur, an ex-pro motocross rider, had managed top 20 positions on a Yamaha XT600 in the previous two races and was hoping that the Ducati V-twin-powered 53bhp 650 would be fast enough on the straight to overcome the handicap of its 182kg dry weight on the rest of the course. It wasn't, but while it was running he managed eight-minute laps and ended up with a trophy for top trail bike.



Going down on the way down

▲ Exhausted by the struggle of actually getting up the artificial dune, it's easy to screw up the descent, leading to further carnage as other riders pile into a stationary bike. Best gas it and hope there's no one down below.

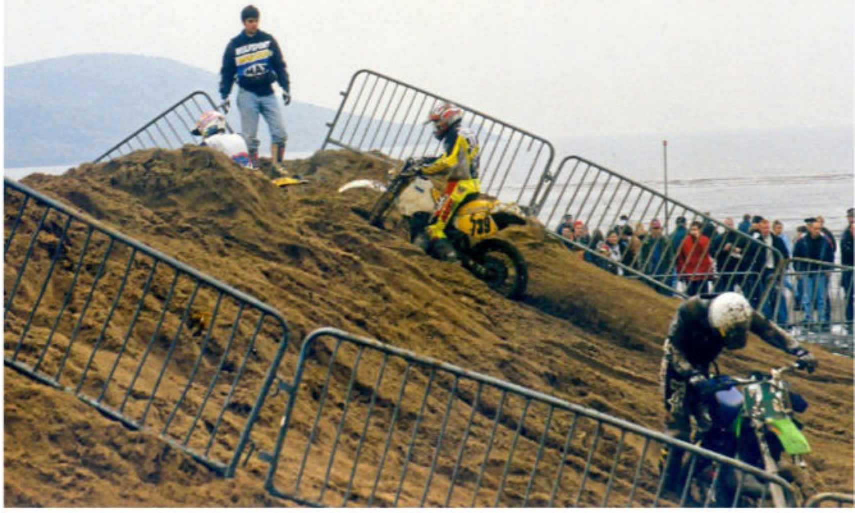
Impressions of a novice

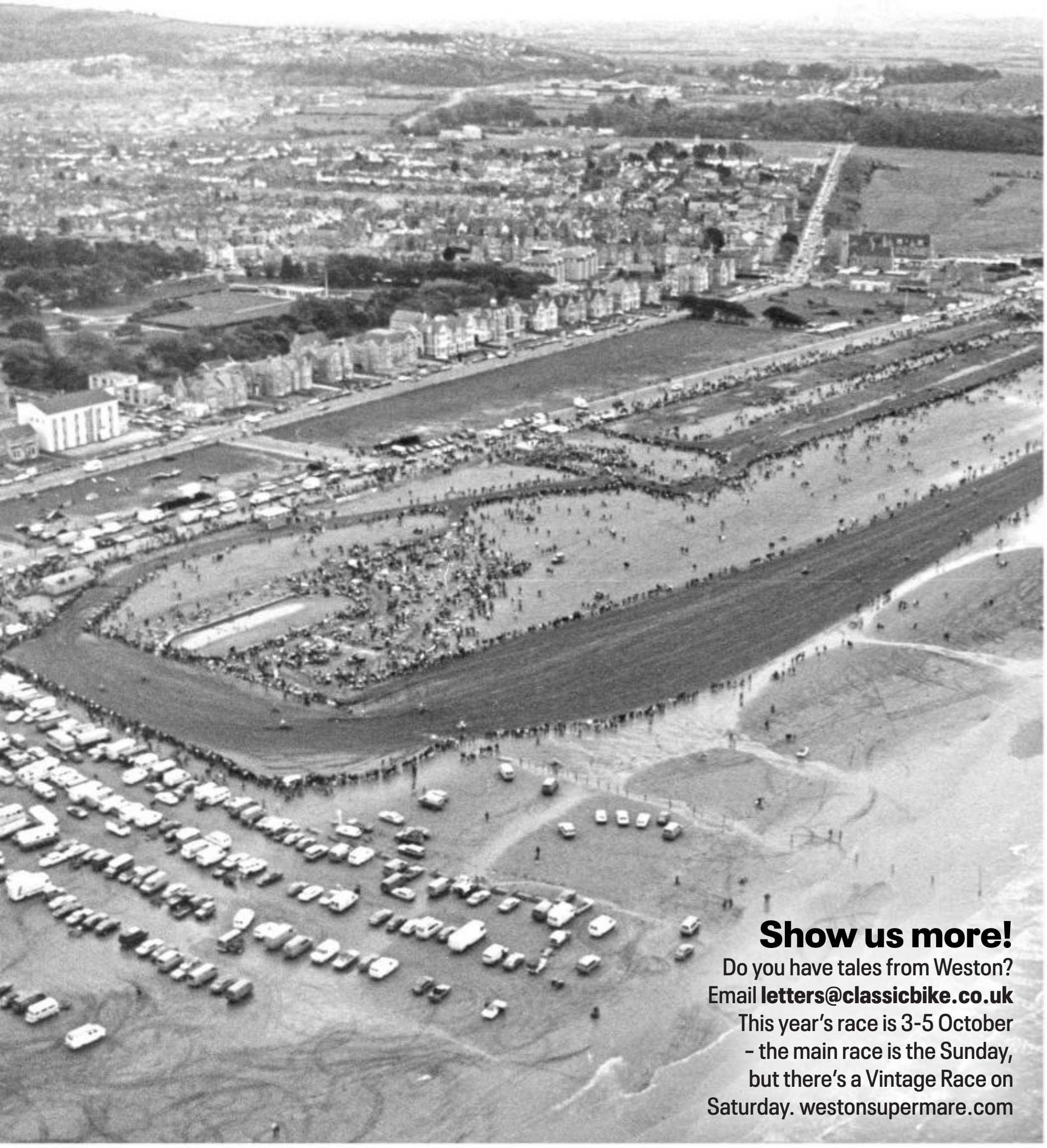
▶ "The only bit that was bad was the bit in the middle," says former *Bike* editor and occasional *CB* contributor Richard Fincher. We think he's referring to everything from the lights going green to the finish flag. "I think the winner did 24 laps. I did four. Even a bloke wearing a gorilla suit and riding a monkey bike did more laps that me. On the third dune, I fell off and was used as traction by other competitors as I slowly sank into the mud. I stopped in the middle and went to the café for a bacon roll and a cup of tea."

This is a rare shot – in the three-hour race, Richard (#739) only passed this way four times. His Suzuki DR350 trail bike wasn't ideal – everyone else was on lighter, more powerful motocrossers. And as a novice trail rider, he was possibly the least experienced rider in a field of predominantly club-level motocross riders, with the odd national and international class competitor. The chance to be in the same event as top-flight racers is one of the attractions.

Despite his experience, Richard looks back on the event with fondness. "I was destroyed after four laps," he admits, "but I'd do it again." He seems to have forgotten that he was 28 years younger when he last attempted it.

'I was destroyed after four laps – but I'd do it all again'





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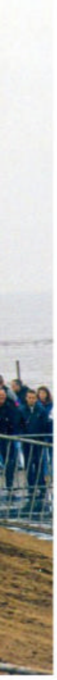
Do you have tales from Weston?
Email **letters@classicbike.co.uk**
This year's race is 3-5 October
– the main race is the Sunday,
but there's a Vintage Race on
Saturday. westonsupermare.com

Seagull's-eye view

◀ This shot shows the race in progress, we think in 1984. The six-mile course runs anti-clockwise, so the long straight starts closest to the camera and runs parallel to the sea, all the way to the first corner and the first dune which is well out of shot to the right. From there, a sequence of dunes, jumps, ruts, soft sand and tight corners bring competitors back to the start line for another lap. The layout of corners and jumps changes each year, but the straight is a permanent feature.

Waiting to get caked

▼ This looks like early Sunday morning in the parc fermé, where competitors bikes were parked overnight. It's commendable that the rider of one bike has tucked their machine away under a cover for the night, when in just a few hours it's going to get absolutely blasted with sand, water and salt. A rainy race day results in severe wear on brakes, chains and sprockets. When it's dry, the damage is mainly caused by the severe sand blasting of the engine cases.



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'When I started, Ducatis were for rock stars'

Times have changed for ace Ducati mechanic and restorer **Ray Petty**. He shows us round his London workshop, full of Italian goodness from all eras

Words and photography **GREG MOSS**

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Knowledge
Fuel injection wisdom

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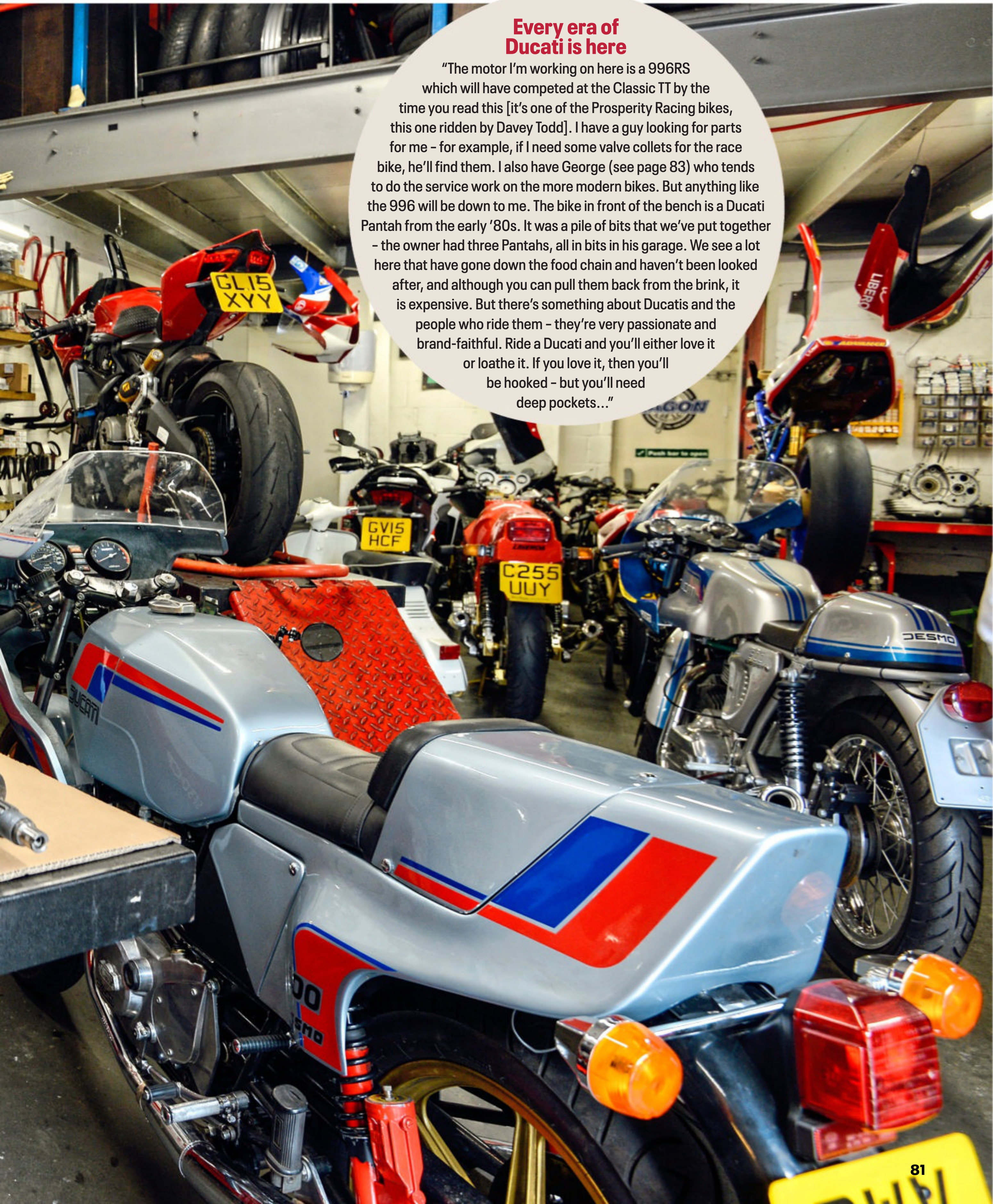
Project bikes
Fixing an RD with a beer can

96
Brit Bike Basics
Get to grips with girder forks

Every era of Ducati is here

"The motor I'm working on here is a 996RS which will have competed at the Classic TT by the time you read this [it's one of the Prosperity Racing bikes, this one ridden by Davey Todd]. I have a guy looking for parts for me – for example, if I need some valve collets for the race bike, he'll find them. I also have George (see page 83) who tends to do the service work on the more modern bikes. But anything like the 996 will be down to me. The bike in front of the bench is a Ducati Pantah from the early '80s. It was a pile of bits that we've put together – the owner had three Pantahs, all in bits in his garage. We see a lot here that have gone down the food chain and haven't been looked after, and although you can pull them back from the brink, it is expensive. But there's something about Ducatis and the people who ride them – they're very passionate and brand-faithful. Ride a Ducati and you'll either love it or loathe it. If you love it, then you'll be hooked – but you'll need deep pockets..."



SERVICE
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Tucked away in the bustling London borough of Greenwich is an oasis of Italian calm – Ray Petty Meccanica.

Ray is one of the UK's finest Ducati mechanics and restorers, having worked on the Italian machines for over 40 years. "I've been at this workshop for about 10 years," he says. "Before that I was in Bethnal Green, and before that I had a Ducati dealership in the early '90s where we sold the new 916 and Monster, which was exciting."

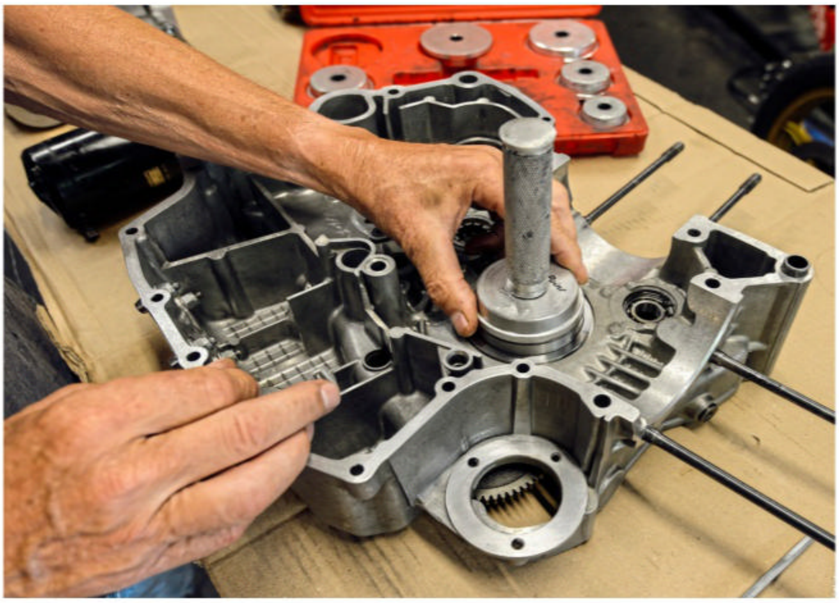
Because of his breadth of experience, Ray's workshop is rammed with Ducatis from all eras. "I've seen a big difference with Ducati over the years – and it's all positive. When I first started out, they were for rock stars, lords and the odd nutjob, but they're quite mainstream now – still utterly unique, though. The thing I have to do nowadays is manage people's expectations of 1970s bikes that weren't super-reliable back in the day. Of course, enthusiasts know all about that..."

raypettymeccanica.com

> ‘The thing I have to do nowadays is manage people's expectations of 1970s bikes’

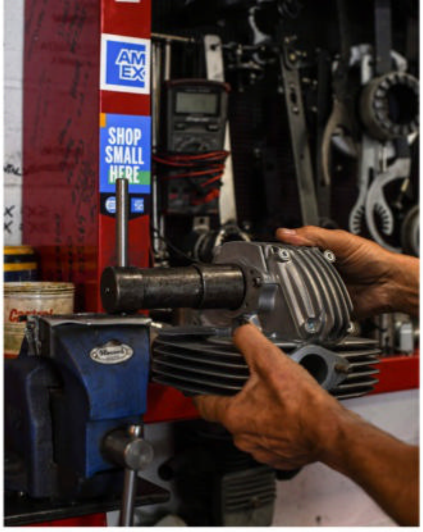
There's rare and then there's...

▲ "This is a rare one - a 1975 900SS. It's the first 900 series Ducati made; they went from the 750 green frame, then they did a 750 in these colours (which is quite rare) and then they did the 900 you see here - but only in 1975. It's got a right-foot gearchange - after '75 they went to a left-foot change. That makes it very rare. It's here to be corrected to concourse condition. The green frame 750 is the rarest bike I've had in the workshop - they made just 401 in 1974, so you can imagine how many of them are left. We won the Salon Privé (the prestigious concours show held at Blenheim Palace) Best In Show a couple of years ago, so we were quite proud of that."



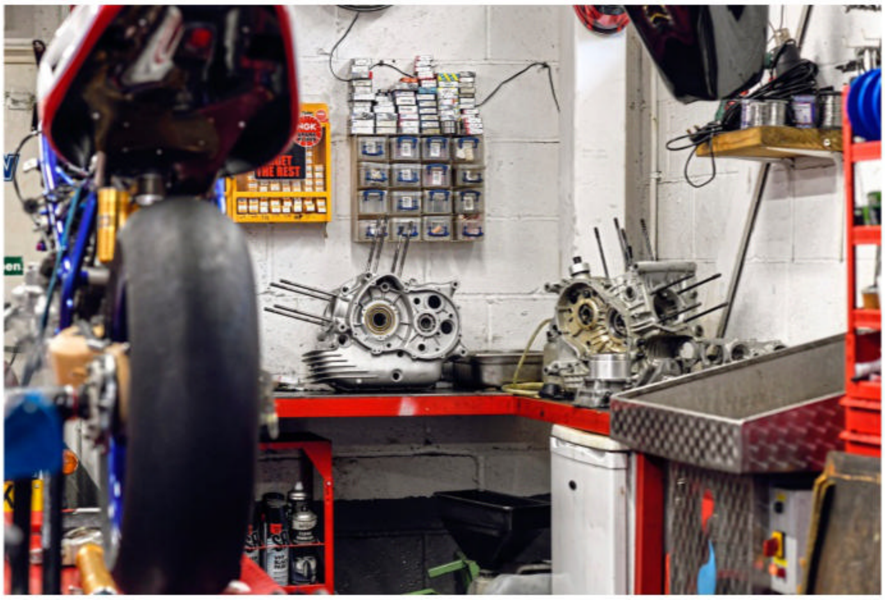
How to fit main bearings

▲ "Here I'm inserting main bearings into the crankcase of a 996RS. When we do a complete overhaul, we replace all the bearings. The crankcases are heated up and all the bearings are taken out, then the cases are sent away for vapour blasting. They come back to be inspected for any hairline cracks. Once I'm happy with the state of them, I then freeze the bearings overnight, heat the cases up and drop the bearings in. Because of the heat difference, nine times out of 10 they just fall in and it's happy days."



Camshaft special tool

"This is a special tool for holding the camshafts still while you tighten up the camshaft nuts on the other end. It's used on round-case and bevel cylinder heads. In this shot, I'm working on a 750 Sport cylinder head from about 1975."



New bearings in

"The engine on the right is from an 916SP that we've used mostly for parts for race engines. The one on the left is a 750 Sport round-case that we're doing a complete ground-up restoration on. Both crankcases have been vapour blasted and had new bearings in. The fridge (underneath) is for keeping bearings in the freezer section."

Seals sorted

"This is George, who's been with me for eight years. He didn't know one end of a bike from another when he arrived and he's done really well - but if you put a Honda in front of him, he won't know what to do with it. Here he's inserting an oil seal into an Öhlins fork leg using an oil seal driver, which drives the outer edge rather than damaging it."

Life before Ducati

Ray remembers his favourite pre-Ducati steeds

Garelli Tiger

This was the bike that started it all for me. The Garelli Tiger 50 was my first road bike and I felt like I was born to be wild. There were whole gangs of us and it was great fun. You had a bike, £4.50's-worth of insurance, some L-plates and off you went. If you survived, it was great!

Yamaha FS1-E

This was my second bike, but it was the first bike that I actually went places on because I trusted that it might actually get there. It opened up my world and I would stare in awe at people on Kawasaki Z1s or CB750 Four Hondas. I'd have a go at keeping up with them, too!

Yamaha RD400

I had an RD400 in 1978 when I was 20. Back then, I was a big Kenny Roberts fan and I would go to race meetings where he appeared, like the Transatlantic Trophies. Back then, all the race bikes were two-strokes so it was the thing to have. Roberts and Sheene were true superstars.

Ray Petty
MECCANICA
DUCATI
DUCATI SERVICE

Hang on, is that a Guzzi?

◤ "Yes [to the left of the Pantah]. Although we're predominantly Ducati specialists, we have expertise in other Italian marques from the 1970s and 1980s. We also work on all the latest Ducatis."

My first rebuild

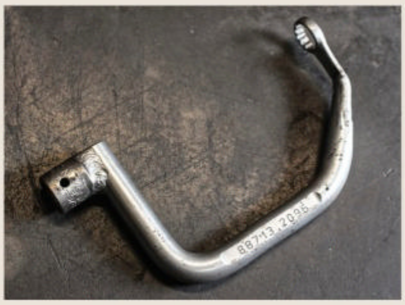
◀ "This was the first bike I ever built. I put it together in my bedroom at my mother's and then carried it downstairs. It's a Yamaha YDS7, the precursor to the RD250. Back then it was cool to get the frames plastic-coated and it was fairly modified. I was 19 or so at the time and I didn't know what I was doing, but it worked."

On the workbench

"This is Ben Bostrom's World Superbike, a 998 from the early 2000s. It came in bits – we've had the frame painted and we're restoring it. It's only about a third of the way through so far. I've also done an 888 Corsa for the same collector and that had everything done – the crankcases were vapour blasted and the cylinder heads stripped. I have a man who acts as my 'head of procurement' – he scans the internet to get me the parts I need."

Useful things

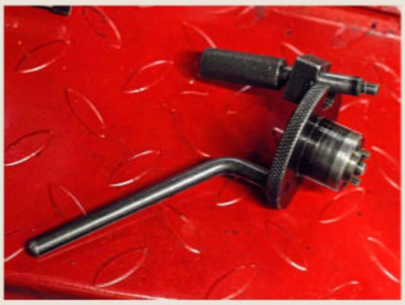
Just a few of the essential items in Ray Petty's workshop



Crow's foot wrench

Cost: £46 **Where:** Machine Mart

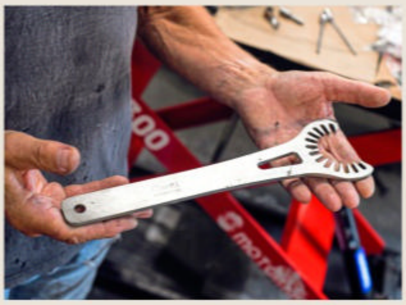
This is a Ducati tool for tightening up the heads on the four-valve motor, but you can get them elsewhere. It's shaped like that so you can get it at the right angle – I'll use it with a torque wrench. You can't do the job correctly without this, because you can't get the right amount of leverage.



Crankshaft locking tool

Cost: From £100 **Where:** eBay

We use this an awful lot, because it's for locking off the crankshaft so you get it in the right position when you're doing the cam belts. It stops the crank from moving, then you can align the pulleys when you're changing the belts. It's a factory tool, which you do see occasionally on eBay.

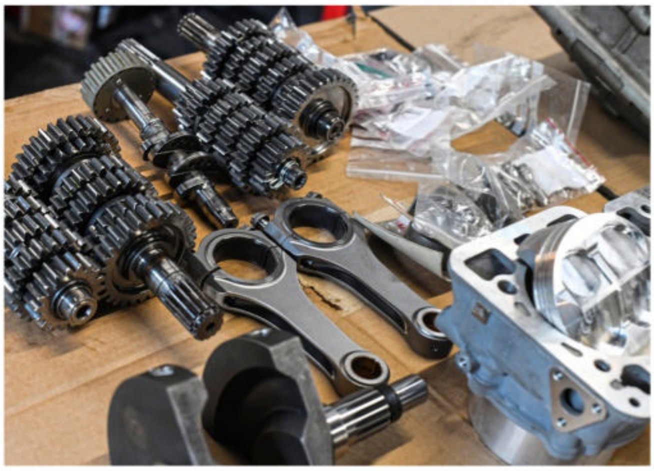


Exhaust collar spanner

Cost: From £20 **Where:** eBay

Strange as it may seem, you need this exact tool for doing up the exhaust collars on a bevel or a round-case. This one is made by Conti [the high-end exhaust manufacturer] but there are others on eBay. Took a long while to find mine. Prior to that, it was a struggle to do them correctly.

FIT THE BEST FORGET THE REST
R3 SPS
UFI
R&G eLEVATION



Tuning the 916 for racing

▲ "Those conrods are titanium and that's two Nova racing gearboxes, a Ducati racing crank for a 996, and a 996RS barrel and piston. They're parts for two bikes we're racing at the Isle of Man. After that they'll need inspection and the valves and pistons probably won't be used again – not for racing, anyway. The Isle of Man is pretty gruelling because it's flat-out 80% of the time. The race bikes make 150bhp – getting that out of a 30-year-old bike reliably isn't easy."

750GT in hibernation

▼ "This is a 1972 sand-cast 750GT that was restored by a company in Holland. The owner wants me to sell it, but no one wants to buy – the classic market has fallen on its arse. This was a £50,000 motorcycle pre-pandemic, but the market is now so flat we've decided to hang onto it and wait for better times. These things go round in circles – if it's what you had on your wall as a teenager, you'll want it."

DUCATI
TUDOR
misano

Next month

Toolbox – the father-and-son Brit bike resto team

Fuel injection

What you need to know

It's been fitted on production bikes for 45 years, so there's every chance you'll find injection on a modern classic. And there's nothing to be afraid of

Photography: BAUER ARCHIVE

Alan Seeley

Don't be scared by black boxes and wires. Injection can be straightforward and easy to fix and improve in your shed.

Fuel injection has a long history in the broader automotive industry, but only hit the mainstream motorcycle market in 1980, with the launch of the Kawasaki Z1000 H1.

Now it has become the default fuel/air supply system for most new bikes, other than a few budget lightweights and some basic off-roaders. More importantly, its adoption through the 1990s and early 2000s means you're likley to encounter it on your modern classic – anything from a Kawasaki GPz1100 and Honda VFR800 to a Suzuki TL1000S and Triumph T595.

The move away from carbs

Fuel injection was no overnight revolution. In those early days, aside from the big Zed, injection tech was also deployed on the short-lived turbo offerings of three of the Japanese big four in the first few years of the 1980s, with just Yamaha sticking to carburettors for its turbo. BMW went injection on the 1983 K100 four-pot, using a Bosch LE-Jetronic system. The Kawasaki Z1000 H had used a similar system licensed from Bosch, which had its roots in the car world and was made by Japan Electronic Control Systems. BMW soon stuck with FI, fitting Bosch Motronic injection across their range.

The 1980s were a febrile time for innovation in motorcycle development. Not all of it stuck, but fuel injection had to be made to work, for two reasons. As engines grew more powerful and revved ever higher, carburettors were increasingly less able to deliver the goods across the range from idle to redline – particularly with increasingly stringent emissions regulations. Make a carb clean at one end of the rev range and it will be an inefficient emissions nightmare elsewhere. Same with power efficiency. The promise of injection was that it would deliver precisely-metered fuel at all loads and revs.

Kawasaki had been visionary in its early adoption of fuel injection. The problem was that the FI systems of the day added weight, complexity and cost. As owners of Z1000 Hs and the GPz1100 that came along in 1981 will attest, they didn't always work that well either.

BMW properly got to grips with injection ahead of most of the competition, particularly on its air-cooled twins. In 1988, Ducati launched the 851. The liquid-cooled Desmodromic twin featured Weber-Marelli injection and would set the template for Ducati's 1990s legend the 916 and its derivatives. FI remained something of a novelty elsewhere, however. The tech-rich Yamaha GTS1000 of 1993 had it, the brand having first dabbled with injection on the 1982 XJ750D. Honda had it on Gold Wings in 1985 and 1986, but abandoned it on the big tourers for 15 years, probably down to cost.

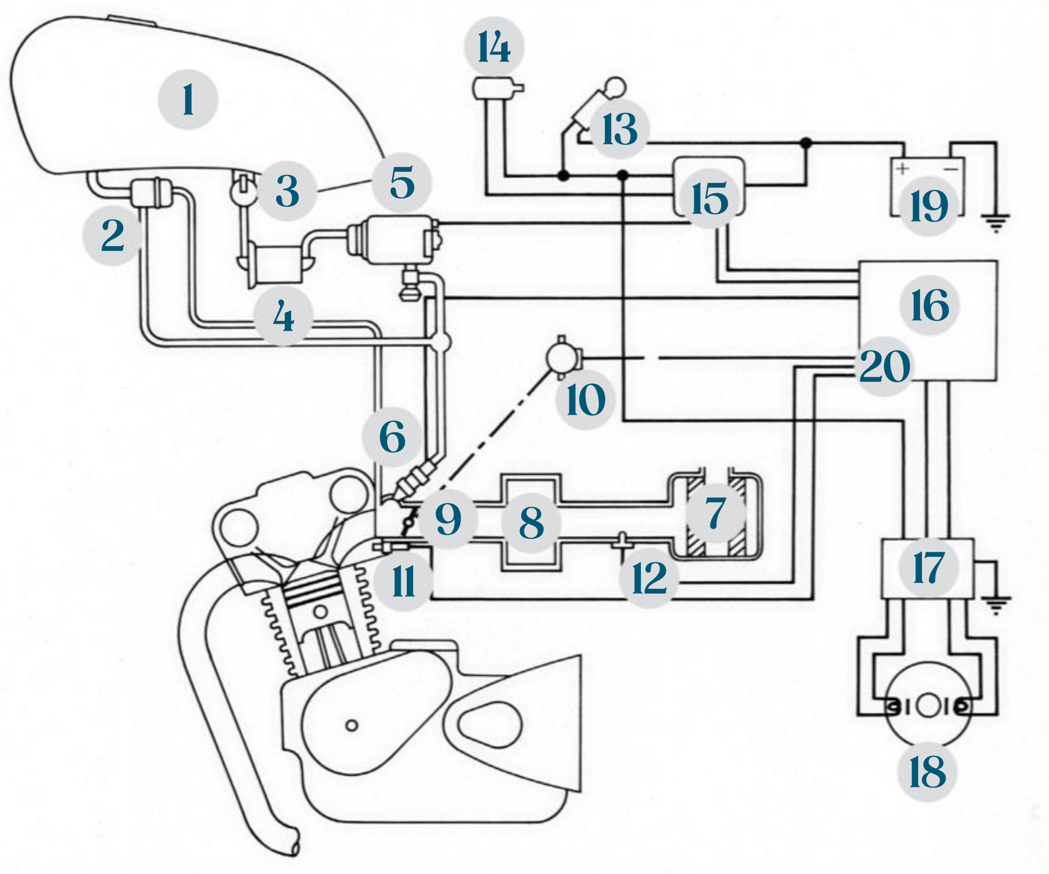
However, as the 20th century moved to a close, fuel injection's relentless march to ubiquity gathered momentum. Suzuki fitted it to the 1998 GSX-R750 SRAD and it featured from the start on the 2001 GSX-R1000 – and Honda's VFR800 had arrived with injection in the same year.

HONDA
SUPER SPORT
PIPER RDA
PIPER
HONDA

Injection is nothing new - as this Piper RDA aftermarket injection kit fitted to a Honda CB750F proves

Kawasaki's system, 1983. Looks complicated but, injectors and sensors aside, this is pretty familiar stuff

1 Fuel tank
2 Fuel pressure regulator
3 Fuel tap
4 Fuel filter
5 Fuel pump
6 Injector
7 Air cleaner
8 Surge tank
9 Throttle valve
10 Throttle sensor
11 Engine temp sensor
12 Air temp sensor
13 Ignition switch
14 Starter switch
15 Relay
16 Injection control unit
17 Ignitor
18 Timing rotor
19 Battery
20 Altitude sensor



As the current century dawned, injection increasingly became the norm. The technology evolved and the glitchiness of early systems disappeared, mass production made the whole thing cheaper, and the rise of FI was inevitable.

How it works

Fuel is pumped under pressure to be mixed with air. Ideally, the correct amount of vapourised fuel is metered to match the speed, load and operating temperature of an engine, as well as the atmospheric conditions within which it is operating. As these parameters change, the amount of fuel delivered is changed to match them.

This requires a number of sensors to supply information to an electronic control unit (ECU) which then tells the injectors when to fire and for how long, thus metering the fuel.

The sensors look at engine speed and load (how much air is being drawn into the engine), throttle and crankshaft and/or camshaft position, engine temperature, along with air temperature and density.

As well as ordinary running when the engine is warm, electronic fuel injection can use this information for automatic fast idle systems that do away with a conventional choke.

On the fuel side of things, this is pumped from the tank to a fuel rail which supplies the injectors. To ensure constant adequate fuel supply, more fuel is pumped than the engine requires at any given point, with the excess being returned to the tank via a pressure regulator.

'Don't let fuel injection put you off adding a modern classic to your collection'

As for the injectors themselves, these feature a solenoid-operated plunger that controls a needle to release atomised fuel into the inlet tract. To understand the level of precision they operate at, the needle is only open for 1.5-10 milliseconds at a time.

A single-point injection system uses one injector per cylinder, while a multi-point one uses additional injectors; for example, the system Suzuki first deployed on the SRAD has two injectors per pot for better control of high and low-speed running.

The injectors reside downstream of the throttle body assembly's butterfly valves, either in the assembly itself or in the inlet tract. This is known as indirect or port injection. Direct injection sprays the fuel straight into the combustion chamber.

While this is common on diesel engines and some petrol cars, direct injection requires greater fuel pressure, hence typically uses high- and low-pressure pumps, requiring more componentry, space and electricity generation. So indirect injection remains the default for motorcycles for now, meeting their needs and keeping weight and cost down.

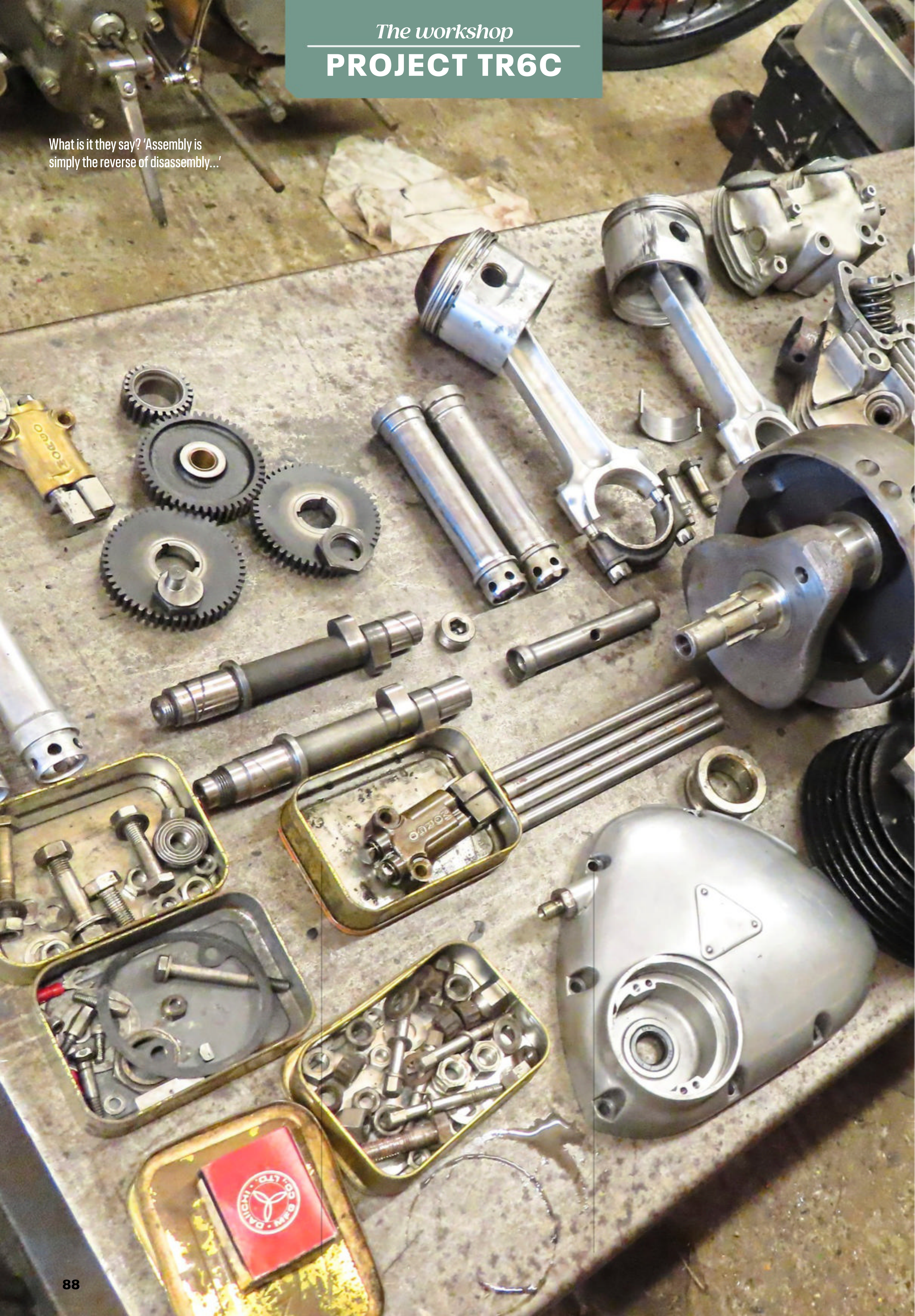
Making it better

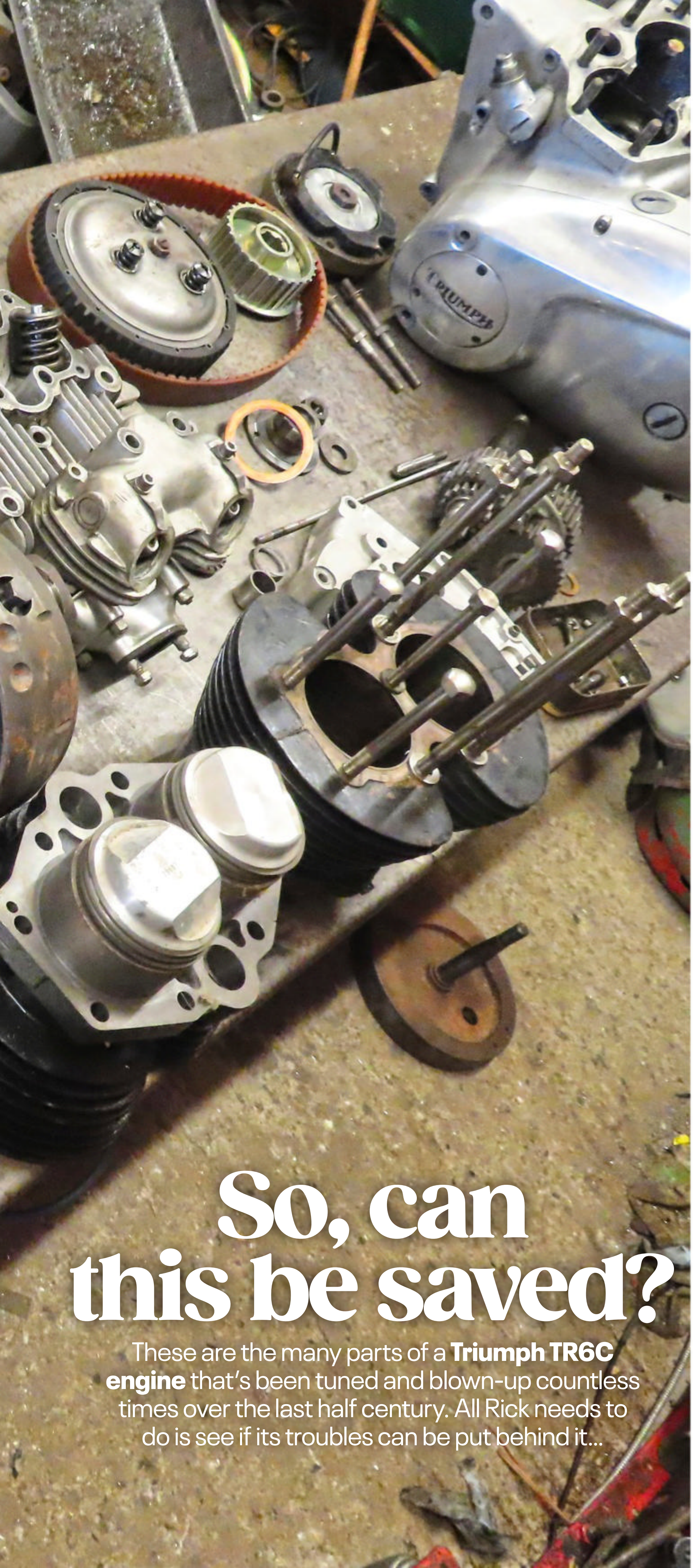
Many modern motorcycles have the luxury of handlebar-switchable 'maps' to cater for various situations from 'rain' to 'race'. The bikes we're all interested in don't – and as previously noted, the injection on older bikes can be a little cranky.

From the late 1990s a whole aftermarket grew up around FI, the most notable product in this being the Dynojet Power Commander. This allowed ECUs to be remapped to smooth the glitches, often introduced by the bike makers themselves to meet emissions regs, and to allow for alternative exhausts and air filters to be fitted and work efficiently. Think playing with jets and needles on carbs, but using a natty black box instead.

Although fuel injection is less DIY friendly than carbs, butterflies still need to be kept in balance and the maintenance/replacement requirements of hoses and filters remain the same.

Don't let injection put you off adding a more modern classic to your collection. It might lack the familiar simplicity of carbs, but an FI system in good order won't give any hassle.


What is it they say? 'Assembly is simply the reverse of disassembly...'



So, can this be saved?

These are the many parts of a **Triumph TR6C engine** that's been tuned and blown-up countless times over the last half century. All Rick needs to do is see if its troubles can be put behind it...

Rick Parkington

1970 Triumph TR6C

"My own TR6 is my 'modern bike' - a practical all-rounder that's given me great service over 40 years of ownership. This project is a completely different proposition."

You're looking at the component parts of a 1970 Triumph 650 TR6C engine – the US spec, single carb model. It belongs to Tony, who got the bike with dismantled engine from the estate of an old friend.

"He'd owned it since 1974 and was forever blowing it up, trying to make it fast enough to keep up with Japanese bikes!" laughs Tony. "If it's still saveable I'd love to get it back on the road in his memory, although I'd rather it was tuned more for reliability than speed..."

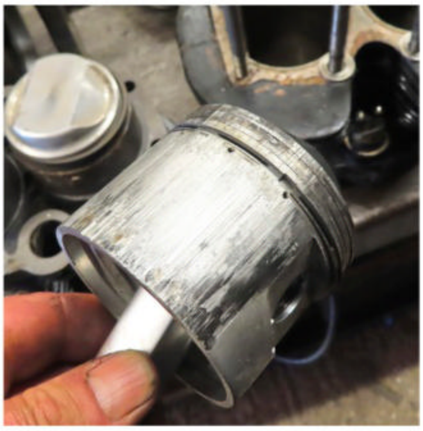
I was 22 when I stared chasing modern bikes on my own TR6 – but with a very different outcome. The engine needed a rebore in 1990, along with new cams, but I've had no reliability trouble at all.

So was my engine lower mileage than Tony's? It's ex-Police and came with a worn-out plus 60 cylinder, so I doubt it. Did I spend more money on the rebuild? Again, no. I fitted (genuine) new wearing parts – bearings, pistons, valves, guides, springs, etc – but only what was needed.

By comparison Tony's TR6 has had money spent on upgrade parts and it's an interesting detective job to find out why it's given more trouble. There's nothing obvious. But I think three things keep my Triumph healthy: 1) Oil changes every 1000 miles; 2) Mechanical sympathy; and 3) I'm very fussy about ignition timing, and I think this may be the problem here.

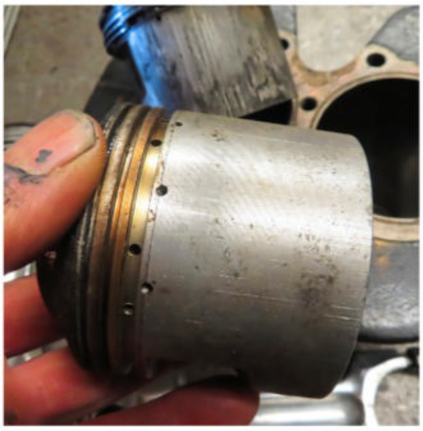
Points are fine but you need to understand them; if the gap is too tight it retards the timing, causing overheating. Maybe electronic ignition was another upgrade this engine needed. We'll never know. What we need to do is delve inside, see if we can fix it, and get Tony on the road...

How a complete TR6C should look



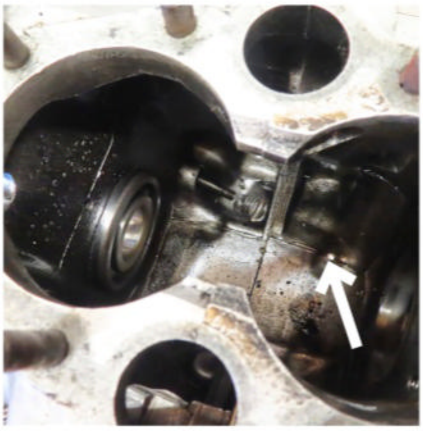
1 Seize the issue

Here's the big problem – serious seizure of the right-hand piston. The left is unmarked. At plus 80 thou (2mm), the bore is double Triumph's rebore limit; luckily there's a new old stock barrel and pistons included.



2 Wonky wear

Maybe the over-bored barrel distorted, but why one side only? With a single carb, it won't be down to weak mix. Stranger still, there's an old set of +40 pistons, also seized one side – and again, the other's like new...



3 Curiouser and curiouser...

This 'witness mark' is another mystery. It looks like the conrod has just touched the case, and the right main bearing's shifted part-way out. I hope it's not loose due to wear in the housing.

4 Stuck in place

Ah. Looks like it was pulled out by the crank; the other bearing is stuck solid. Both had been 'Loctited'. Never use it 'just as a precaution' – if the shaft's not worn, it makes the fit too tight.

5 Check the little bits too

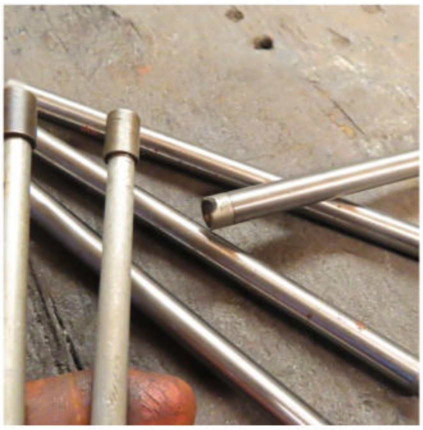
The crank's been ground to -.020in undersize but measures within spec. The 'sludge trap' filter's been cleaned out already – but all oilways, the release valve and this drilling need to be checked, too. Good, all clear.

6 It's not all bad news

There's slight scoring on the big end shells, but it's not bad enough to suggest blockage. I think we'll get away with a new set and light polish of the journal with smooth emery strip. Let's hope so...

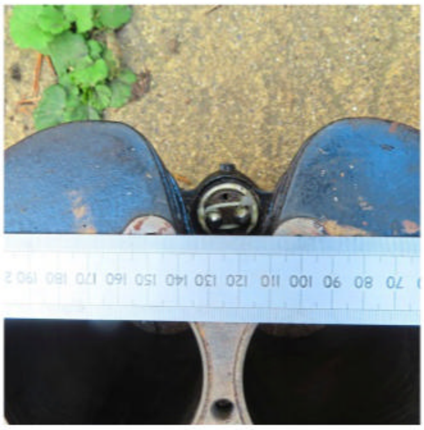
7 Following the evidence

Rod honing marks may indicate correction of distortion – I'll need to check fit with the new shells. Deeper-type locknuts could explain that witness mark in the crankcase. This corner's a bit shiny...



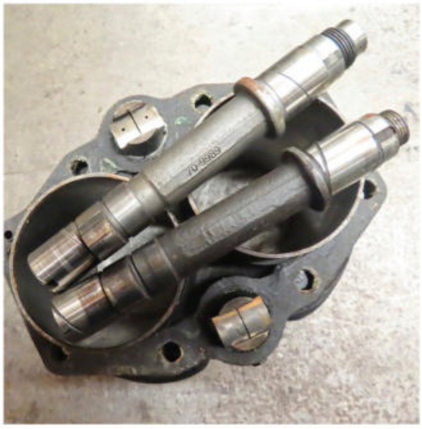
8 Pushrod imperfection

Racing 'chrome-moly' pushrods are less flexy than standard aluminium; chipping happens if they aren't correctly located on the tappet. If they're not available singly, a standard set is fine for road use.



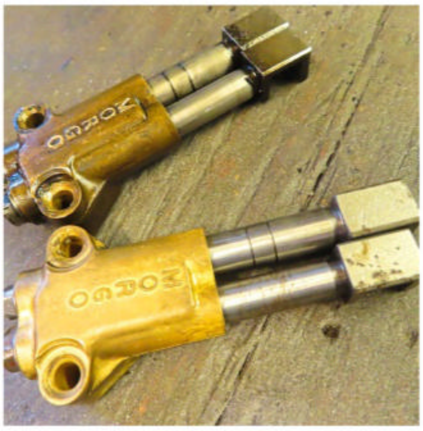
9 A hammer blow

The tappet guides are out of line. There's a lockscrew to secure them, but they can twist when hammer-fitting, even if you use the correct punch. If possible, it's much better to use a press for this job.



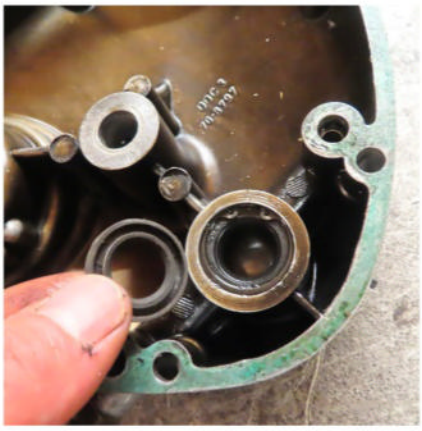
10 Got away with it

Misaligned guides set the tappets off-square to the camshafts, which can damage them. Luckily, both are fine – these are standard 1970 cams and it looks like the exhaust one's fairly new.



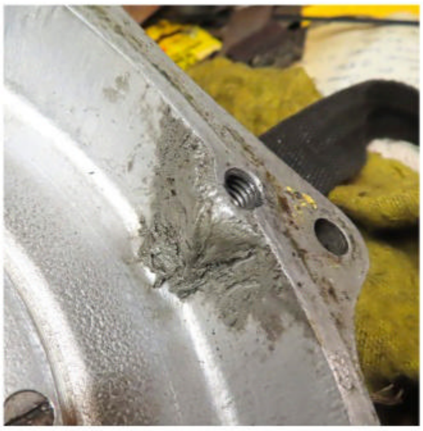
11 Oil's well here too

Morgo oil pumps are higher-output than standard. There's an old one too, so it's been replaced once already. Scored or pitted plungers will reduce pumping power – but both of these look OK.



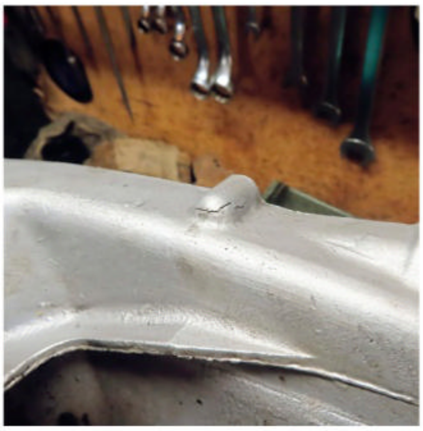
12 Small but important

This 70-4568 oil seal is the most important one in the engine. It seals the oil delivery from the pump to the big ends, so always replace it. It's retained by a circlip, which must be properly settled.



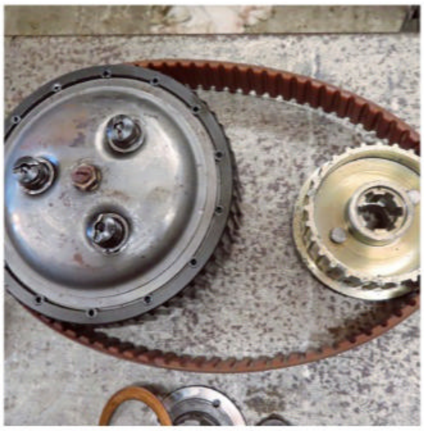
13 Signs of a hard life

There's visible damage to the primary case, maybe where something came loose and jammed in the primary chain. It's been patched up with sealer, but now is the time to get it properly welded.



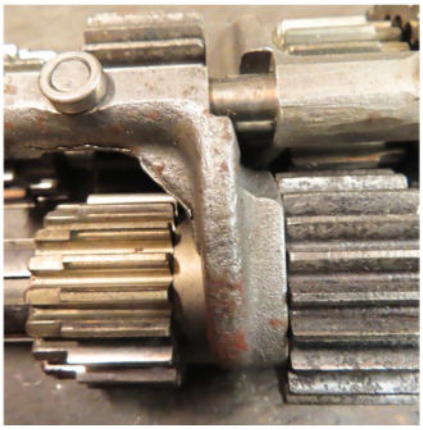
14 Keep that welder to hand

This crack has been caused when either too long a screw has been used, or old gasket sealer has locked hydraulically. It's worth clearing holes with a tap. The gearbox drain needs welding while we're here, too.



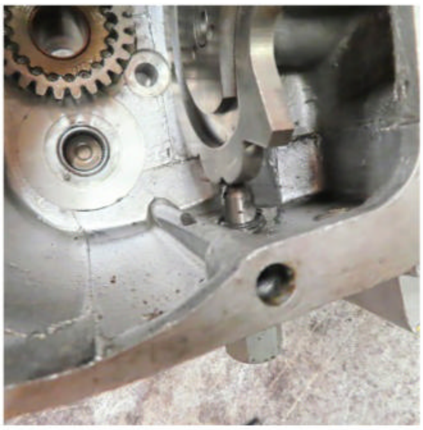
15 Not all bad news

Belt primary drive can go back on. It's maintenance-free but does put permanent load on the bearings, so I prefer chain – but it would be costly to get all the necessary original parts to go back to that.



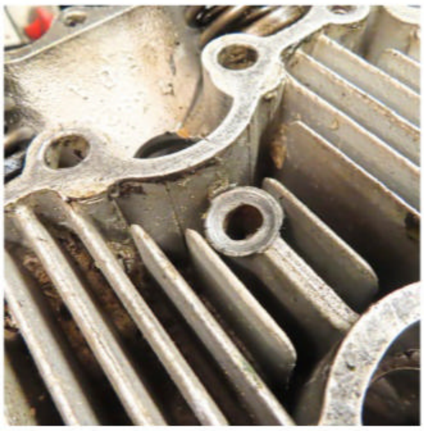
16 Half 'n' half

The gearbox is a mixture – some gears are badly corroded, others look quite new. I'd guess the 'box had water inside and only the worst gears were replaced; arguably they should be changed as a set.



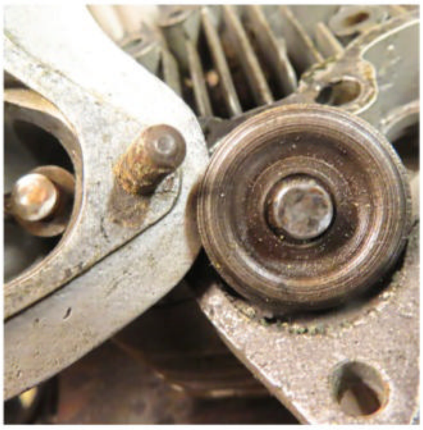
17 Sensible update

Pitted teeth are weaker – and noisier – but they worked before, so maybe I'll use them until a good set turns up. The good news is that the dodgy 1970-only leaf-spring detent has been converted to plunger.



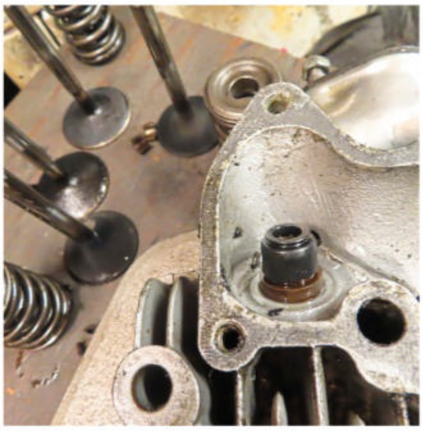
18 Swinging on spanners

The squashed centre boss on the cylinder head is not unusual – this bolt is smaller and it has a lower torque setting. I'll probably mill it back flat and compensate for the lost depth with a washer.



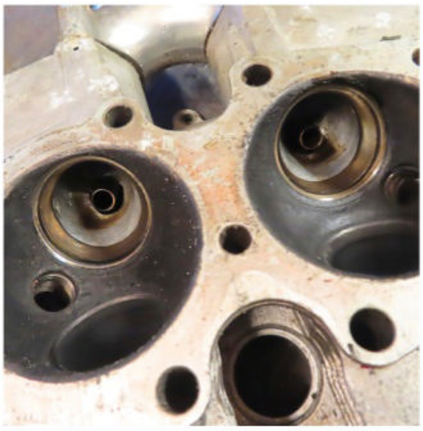
19 Valve violence

The rocker boxes are fitted with mushroom-head tappets whose bigger radius should have a more gentle rolling action on the valve tip. But despite that, the tips still look surprisingly battered…



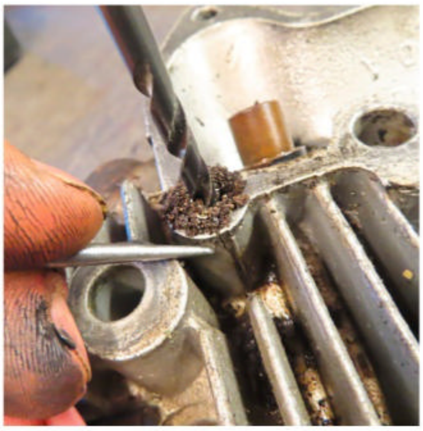
20 Pretty good up top

Otherwise, the head seems to be OK. Valves look fairly new (although very oily, despite non-standard stem seals) and the exhaust guides are worn. New valves, guides and springs should sort it all.



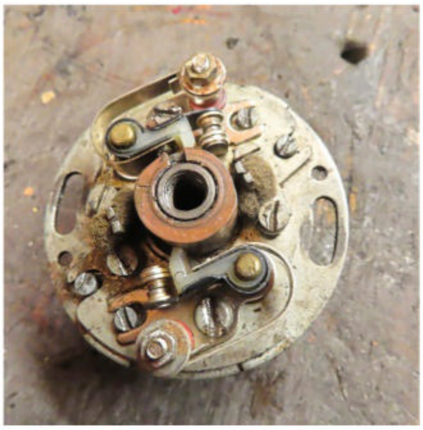
21 Signs of richness

Blackened chamber suggests this engine has been running very rich, which puts soot on the oil and explains the blackness in the crank cases. Not a big problem, but it can fill the sludge trap faster.



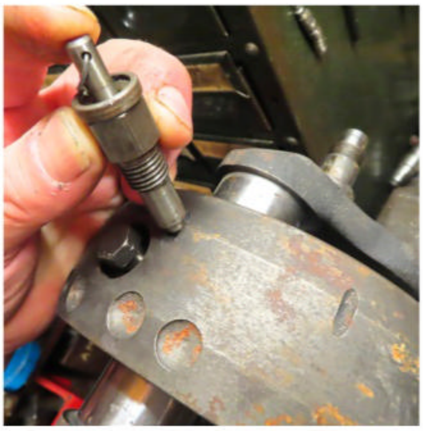
22 Cracking up

I spotted a crack on this rocker box screw hole. These screws are often overtightened, but in this instance it's a good example of the hole bursting due to having filled with old dirt and sealant.



23 Culprit revealed

So what caused the seizures? Despite the other upgrades, the TR6 still has points. This Lucas 6CA unit allows individual adjustment of each side, allowing both cylinders to be timed perfectly…



24 Tip top timing

…but you must set/check *both* sides – not just one, expecting the other to be the same. The timing tool shown here screws into the crankcase and stops the crank at TDC or the 38° BTDC firing point.

Three things…

Micrometer

A 1-2in micrometer is essential for measuring big-end journals – even if you struggle to read one, it'll find ovality and differences side to side. They cost from £20, but quality secondhand one are easy to find.

Tappet punch

Designed to be hammered (but pressing is better), this tappet guide punch prevents breaking the tappet guide during fitting or removing, and helps correct location. Available from about £30.

Extractor and puller

The bruising shown above is due to levering off the cam gears, so it's important to buy or borrow the proper extractors and pullers. A set costs about £120 new, but there are plenty to be had secondhand.

Next Month

The parts are on order, so Rick can start getting Tony's engine back into one (working) piece

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

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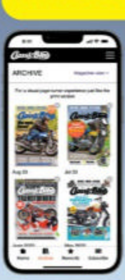

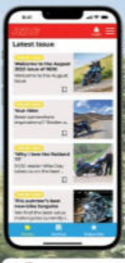

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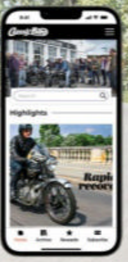
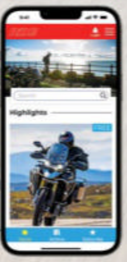
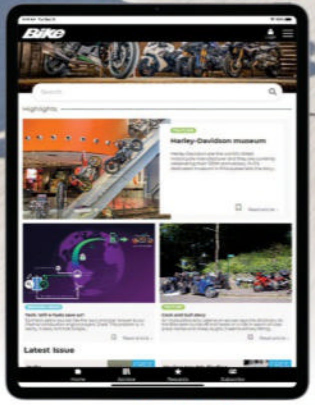
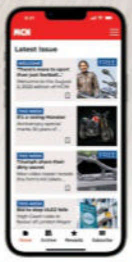






Harley-Davidson museum



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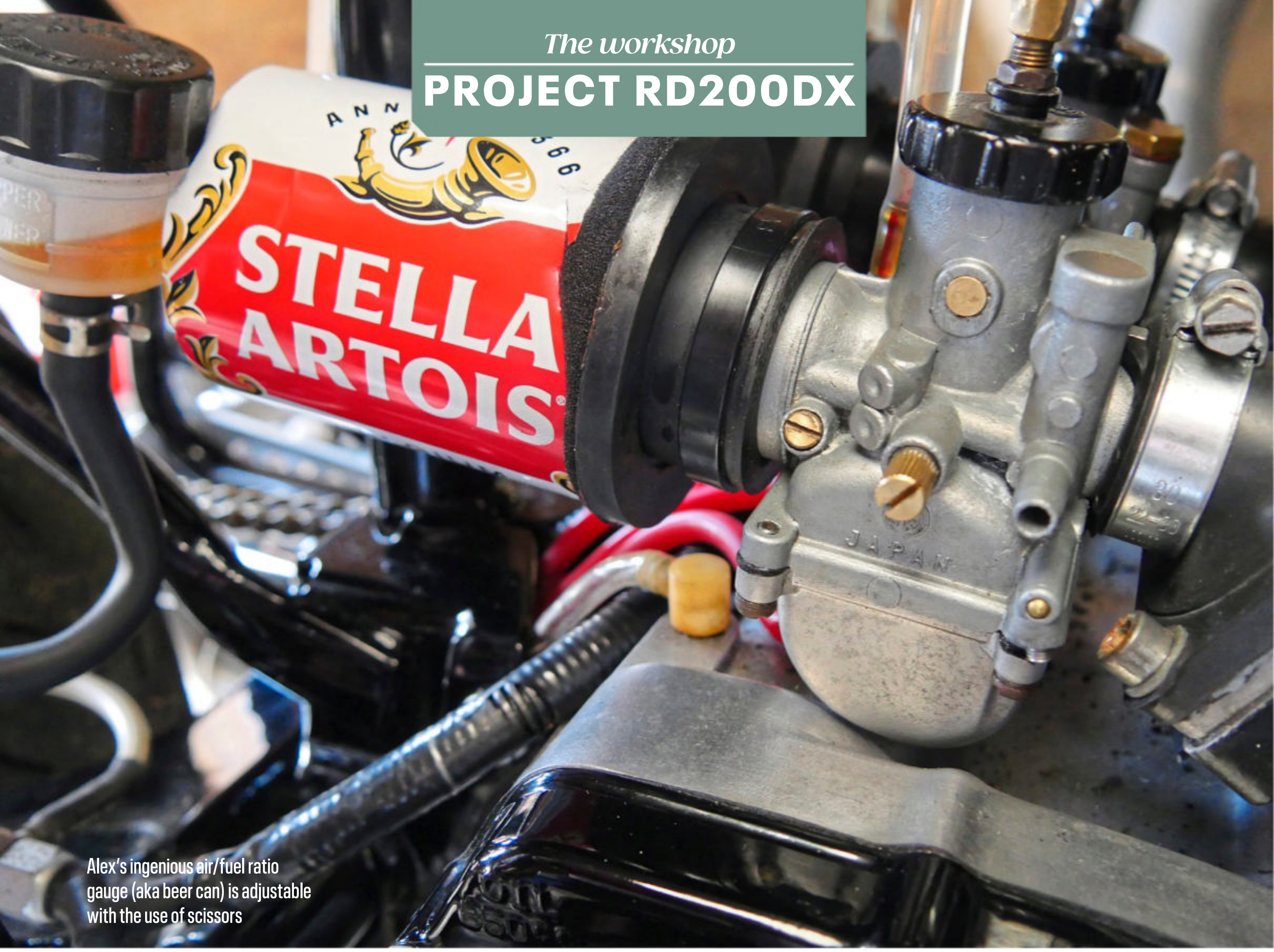


Alex's ingenious air/fuel ratio gauge (aka beer can) is adjustable with the use of scissors

Beer is the answer

Having bought his **Yamaha RD200DX** because of its tasty exhausts, Alex found that the two-stroke's fuelling is miles out. But he's come up with a canny solution...

Alex Innocent

1978 Yamaha RD200DX

Alex is an engineering surveyor and motocross racer who made his *CB* debut last month. Getting this '70s twin has scratched a long-time itch for another two-stroke.

Progress has been made. The RD is slowly getting there – and my domestic situation has improved. I bought the bike by blowing the cash I'd promised my wife we'd spend on a scooter – but I've made amends. There's now a cheap scooter in the stable, which has cheered her up and got me out of the dog house.

As for the RD, it's now getting me home more often than breaking down. When I got the bike, it was on standard 80 main jets with foam pod filters, aftermarket reeds and the lovely pipes that inspired its purchase. But it was still running lean after I'd fitted 100 main jets. The bike also developed a slight but unnerving weave from the rear, which felt like a puncture, and the headlight stopped working...

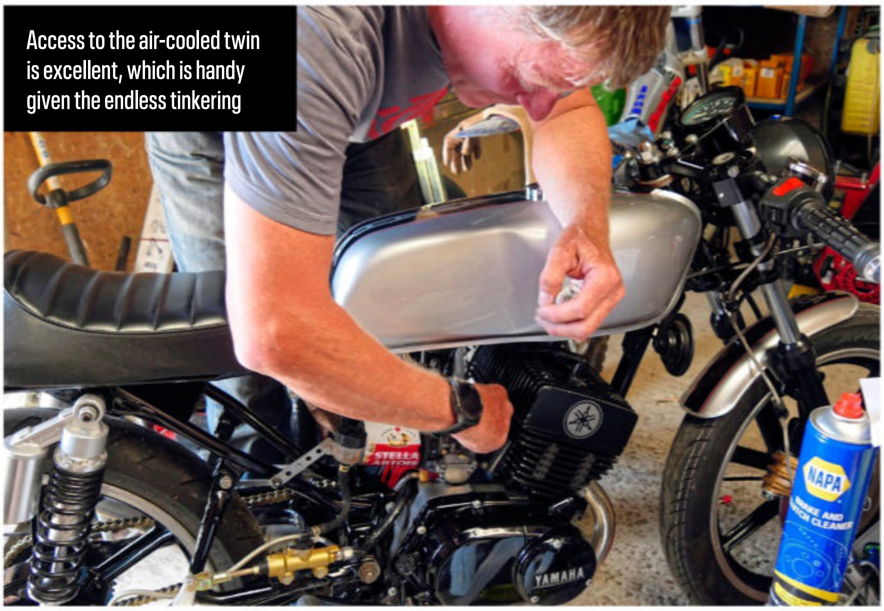
When I get home, I order some 140 main jets. I also take the headlight apart and discover that the wiring to the bulb has melted through at a joint. There's a simple solution, though – the bulb should be 35w, but there's a 60/55w in the holder. A 35w bulb sorts the wiring, but the weaving back end bugs me overnight, so I have a close look at the rear tyre. There's no obvious sign of damage, but the pressure is slightly low... then I spot that it has a tubeless valve.

Breakdown outside a country pub. Could be worse...

The DX rims are cast and have a rim shape and design that's not suitable to run a tubeless tyre. I can literally push the tyre off the bead with my fingers after lowering the pressure just a bit – and it deflates instantly. Nightmare! Dangerous, too.

I buy a new tube, but I'm rushing because the weather's good and I want to get out and try the larger jets – which leads me to pinch-puncture the tube with the tyre levers. I find an old 18in tube in the shed.

Then, after taking most of my knuckle skin off on the tyre trying to get the tube valve in the wheel hole on the narrow rim, I remember I have the perfect tool for the job – an air valve puller gathering dust in the toolbox. It goes in first time with that.



Access to the air-cooled twin is excellent, which is handy given the endless tinkering

With the 140 main jets installed, I head out for a test ride. The bike goes much better, but still has a lean feeling on full throttle and a slight bogging on mid-throttle. This is despite my having stopped at the roadside to raise the slide needles to the top, using my trusty long-nosed pliers to hold the circlips. If you don't do that, they can ping off and leave you stranded (as I learned years ago). The fuelling still isn't perfect – but it's rideable now, so I head further afield. I take in some good roads on a perfect summer evening.

I'm getting a feel for the Yamaha. Despite its small size and cramped riding position, it feels good from the seat (although my right knee disagrees), sounds amazing and turns heads wherever it goes. I pull over at a junction and turn the bike off to check everything. Some young lads pull up and simply ask: 'Has it seized?' Without thinking, I reply: 'Not yet'. I wonder later – why was I so prepared for the question, and why would they even ask?

The bike starts sounding lean again on my extended ride, then starts cutting out, so I turn the fuel tap upwards to reserve. It stops. The tank is virtually bone dry. In desperation, I tip the bike on its left-hand side and see fuel dribbling into the carbs through the fuel pipes. It turns out reserve on my fuel tap is in the down position...

The RD fires up and I short-shift it to get as far as I can, stopping with a bone-dry tank – conveniently, right outside a country pub. It's too far to push it home, so I wander inside for a courage-building pint before ringing my poor wife to come and collect me... again.

I've spent a fair bit on jets by now, so decide to do an experiment. I work out that, if you cut the ends off Stella cans, they slip over the pod filters. I then ride the bike and gradually trim the cans back with scissors until the jetting feels spot on (or close). This reduces some of the guesswork by giving me an indication of how much bigger I need to go. Yes, I could go to a dyno – but that's expensive and not as much fun.

> **'I could go to a dyno – but that's not as much fun'**

Stella cans on, and with a full tank of fuel (about eight litres on the aftermarket tank) I set off for another ride. It's immediately very rich, so I get the scissors out and trim some of the cans off. It's better but still rich, so I stop and trim more off. When the bike starts again, it runs on one cylinder. It's a mile push home, so I wait where I pulled up while a nice local man looks for a plug spanner.

After a while, I try bumping it – it starts straight away. The heat must have burned off the oil on the plug while I waited. I set off again with newly-trimmed cans and the bike is better than it ever has been for me so far. I make it to a bike café and then head home without breaking down. The plugs now have the lovely biscuit brown colour starting to appear on the insulation near the electrode. From my experiment, I guess at 148 mains – so I order yet more jets for my growing collection.

In the meantime, the fork seals are leaking and there are other niggles, so the chassis moves into pole position on the ever-growing to-do list. I'll tell you how I get on with it next month...

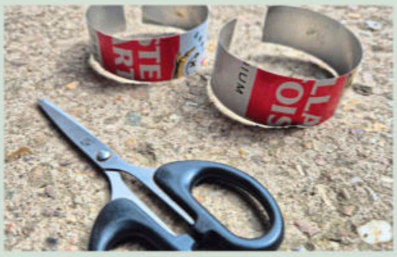
Three things...

Air valve puller

An amazing tool for pulling innertube valves through the rim without taking your knuckles off in the process.

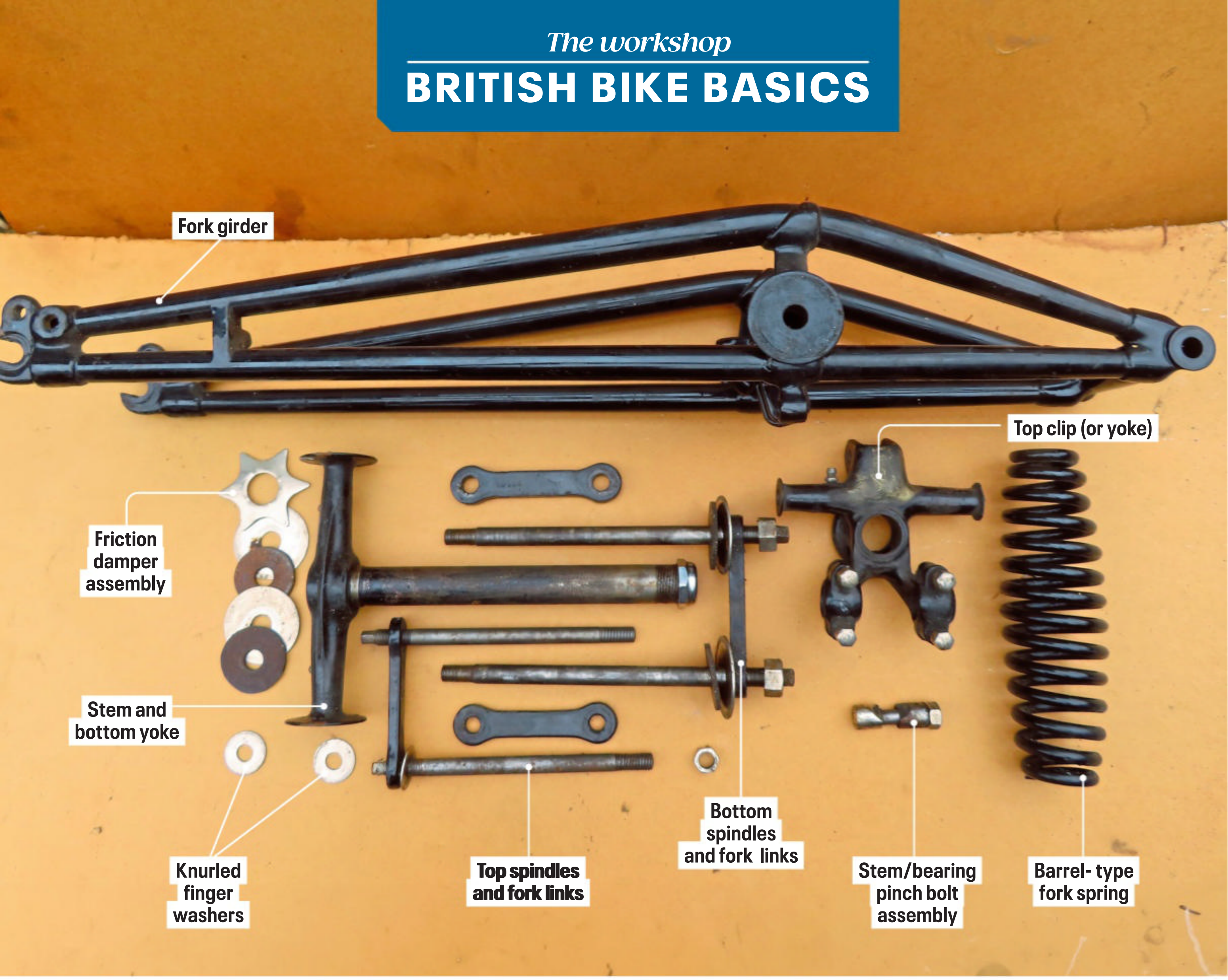
Pliers

Just the job for holding the circlips while adjusting slide needles on the roadside, so they can't spang off into the scenery.



Stella cans & scissors

Slipped over filters, these let you adjust fuel/air ratio on the go, saving cash on jets (and giving an excuse to buy more beer).



Girder forks

Girder forks separate pre-war bikes from post-war. They may be fairly primitive, but they were effective. Here's how to get the best from them

Rick Parkington

Girder forks appeal to me because they're lean and functional - but beware, they're so fascinating to watch in action you can forget to look where you're going...

The need for a sprung fork came about after people started fitting engines into heavy cycle frames. While the rider was fairly comfortable on a deluxe version of a bicycle sprung saddle, the greater weight and speed of a motorcycle hammered the rider's arms and affected roadholding. Various systems were devised but by the late 1920s they had mostly resolved into the classic triangulated girder fork shown.

Although large manufacturers like BSA and Triumph made their own forks, others bought them in from companies like Webb, Brampton and Druid – and like telescopics, there's a wide variety of sizes, so when looking for forks note all dimensions.

Triangulation is the girder fork's main advantage; they are very rigid in the fore-and-aft direction that supports weight, braking and road shocks, more so than telescopic. They're weaker side-to-side, but that's little concern on a solo machine; the main isue is a lack of proper damping.

Fibre-disc friction dampers are a compromise, affecting compression and rebound equally, but generally it's wise to dodge potholes when riding on girders. Vincent's 'Girdraulic' was a good attempt to combine the virtues of girders with hydraulic damping, but was complex and too unconventional for popular approval.

Modest spindle wear doesn't seriously affect handling – but side-play of the fork girder between its links does, so keep it adjusted. Worn spindles can be replaced, but usually the bore is also worn so it's not a 100% fix. Spindles must be made from a quality 'tough' steel like EN16T – don't use anything hardened, like silver steel, as it is too brittle for impact load.

Serious spindle wear, especially where no replaceable bushes are fitted, is a specialist job to fix – and costly, as is retubing damaged girders. But don't assume pitted tubes are scrap – corroded tube is remarkably strong and any corrosion is usually visible on the outside. But beware fitting powerful modern brakes to girders – they're not designed for it.

● **Next month:** Swingarm rear suspension

Lots of lovely lube

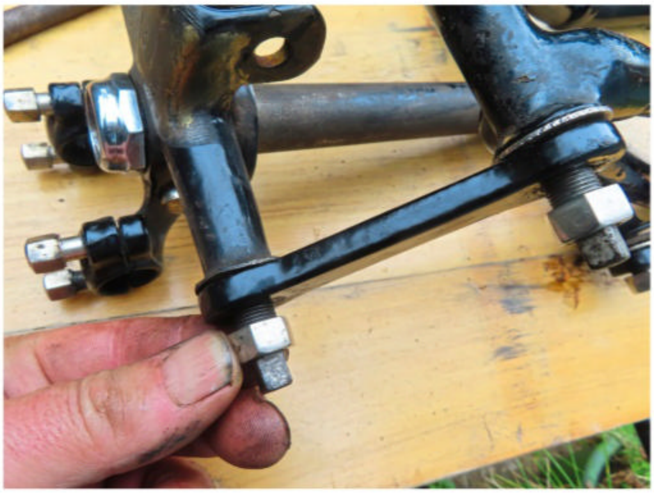
Regular lubrication is vital to prevent wear. Load and movement soon squeezes grease out; that gets messy, so people run them too dry which causes wear. Grease regularly… and avoid pale clothing.

Check your nipples

Plain oil holes gave way to push-on grease nipples in the mid-'20s – but you'll need to use an old Tecalemit gun or upgrade to later snap-fit nipples. Threads are usually 3⁄16 or ¼ BSF, or ⅛ BSP.

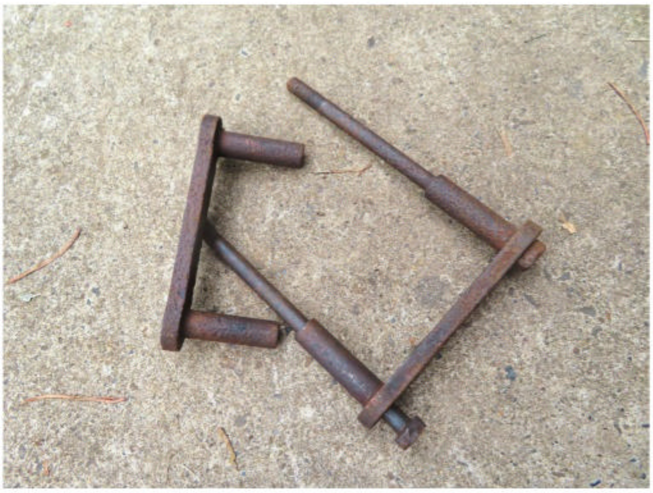
Time for a sandwich

Side-play adjustment varies, but in essence you're sandwiching the girder between the links. Knurled washers are there to check tightness – adjust them so they turn freely, but touch both sides.



Thread your way through

At least one side link is threaded, so turning the spindle alters clearance before locking with a nut. Brampton spindles and links are threaded left and right, so turning the square pulls them together.

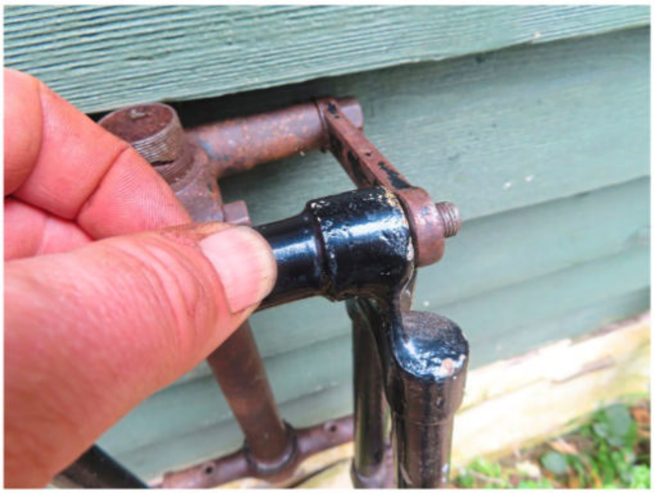


Links and load bearing

BSAs from the 1920s to the 1940s used links which included the load-bearing part of the spindle. One side is threaded; bolts join the sides and can be adjusted for clearance, then locked by a nut.

Watch out for wear

Spindle and link wear is the most common problem. New parts may not be available, but are fairly simple to make/have made. Spindles must be made from 'tough' (not hard) steel like EN16T.

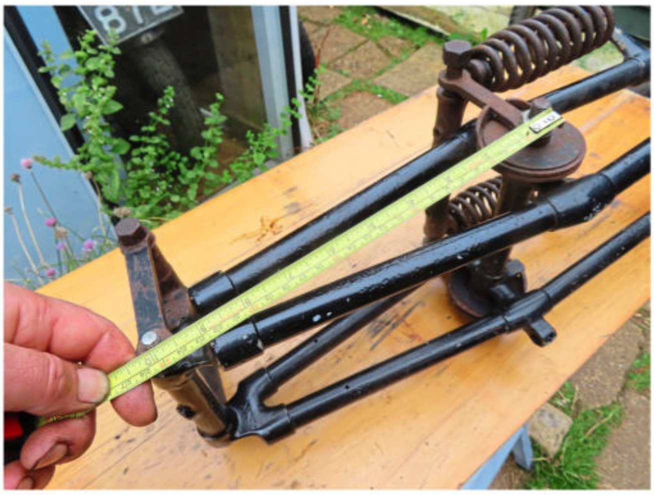


Hone out unbushed ovalling

Unbushed forks can wear oval; machining to take bushes may work, but can weaken castings that step down thinner (as above). Honing out wear and fitting an oversize spindle is a safer solution.

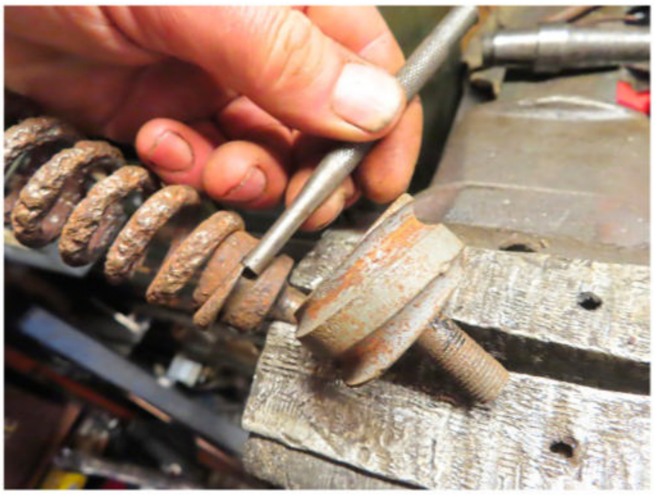
If your girders are bent...

Straightening is best left to a specialist. The triangulation makes it difficult – unless the fork legs have just been pinched together during careless storage, when they'll usually lever apart again without heat.



Pre-purchase measuring

When buying, the critical measurement, apart from obvious ones like width and overall length, is the distance between spindles – this must match the frame headstock to keep the links parallel.



An inspector coils

Springs are usually wound onto a spiral holder. Twisting the spring to 'unscrew' it will only make it grip tighter – you need to tap the open end with a punch to loosen the coil and free the grip.

Girder survivors

Girder forks survived into the '50s on lightweights like the 98cc Excelsior Consort, fitted with these Webbs as late as 1959. They're basic, but better than some cheap telescopic alternatives.

In the toolbox

Old push-on Tecalemit grease guns are cheap at autojumbles and boot fairs; ex WD brass types are handy for the toolkit but tricky to refill. All-purpose grease is all you need.

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON

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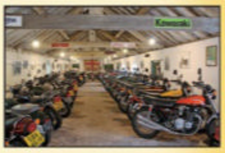

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1977, 66000 miles, Historic status, no road tax or MoT required. Well maintained, has been looked after. It has regularly been used during time of ownership for commuting etc. Has recently had new tyres front and back. £4500 Wiltshire, tel:01747840359

BSA A10
1959, Red/Black with chrome mudguards, twin clocks, rack, T/L/S, front brake, Avons, photos available, V5C, from my private collection, free delivery. £6950 Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

BSA A7
1958, 63127 miles, Fully working, spent a lot on her over the years. Excellent runner and in good condition. Delivery available. V5C present. £5499 West Yorkshire, tel:07703474600

BSA BANTAM
1964, BSA Bantam Trials, electric ignition, alloy wheels, 185cc, contact for further information. £2600 Bridlington, tel:07816561852

ARIEL 350
1959, 3300 miles, Show condition/excellent, fully rebuilt machine, last year of the Magneto Four Strokes. £2950 Essex, tel:07395057344

BMW R65
1985, American import, used for 3 years, MoT April 26, lots of new parts with receipts. Paintwork suffered in the American heat. But still very usable. Original condition, not restored, reliable. ONO. £1800 North Yorkshire, tel:07500040030

BSA A65
1962, One off custom, 1962 reg, fitted with 1967 big valve Hornet engine. Boyer ignition, new Amal premier carbs. Starts easily, runs perfectly, excellent front brake set up by SRM. £4750 South Somerset, tel:07989030387

BSA B SERIES
1969, 9500 miles, With matching numbers, has done 9500 miles since a full engine rebuild, end feed roller conversion, electronic ignition 20 years ownership, VGC. £4500 Uk, tel:01766770648

BSA GOLDSTAR
1955, Engine and frame numbers match, touring trim as confirmed in dispatch book and engine brake test sheet, belt primary, Mikuni carb standard gearbox 12V. £7250 Dorset, tel:07414289472

ARIEL RED HUNTER
1959, 350cc, in VGC and used regularly, good solid reliable bike, personal delivery possible 50 miles. £3250 Methwold, tel:01366728030

BMW R80
1978, 66000 miles, Serviced, many new parts including starter motor, brake pads, seat and silencers, good runner. £2500 Bristol , tel:07960874115

BSA A65
1967, In need of restoration, been stored for decades, 99% complete and not dismantled, 2 owners from new, old and new log books. £1950 Uk, tel:01242861164

BSA B31
1959, Green, maintained in immaculate condition, fair weather use only, kept in dry garage, 18 years the present owner but now too old to ride it. £5000 Hampshire, tel:01962734696

BSA GOLDSTAR
1955, 2000 miles, CB34 Mikuni carb, Newby clutch, belt drive, BTH magneto, RRT gearbox, spares included, GP carb crank, magneto std gearbox. £10500 Bolton, tel:07883721057

ARMSTRONG MT500
1986, Fitted with 604E engine, nice condition, recent stainless exhaust and Falcon shocks, original panniers, Military history and manuals, £3500, single bike trailer also available. £3500 Uk, tel:07557018930

BSA 250 SINGLE
1937, 1937 Pre-War BSA B21 Sports Rigid Girder 250cc OHV. Frame number, HB20 6999. Engine number, HB21 2285. This model was only made for one year, making it quite a rarity. It is a light motorcycle. £4300 Nottinghamshire, tel:07970285668

BSA A7
1958, 63127 miles, Fully working, spent a lot on her over the years. Excellent runner and in good condition. Delivery available, V5C present. £5499 Holmfirth, tel:07703474600

BSA B33
1967, Bit of money spent, forks, shocks, tyres etc, starts 1st/2nd kick, need space. £2800 Glasgow, tel:07511619810

BSA LIGHTNING
1969, 9500 miles, With matching numbers, has done 9,500 miles since a full engine rebuild by SRM and new stainless rims and spokes, new tyres, 20 years ownership, VGC. £4500 Uk, tel:01766770648

BULTACO FRONTERA
1980, Fully restored, rebored piston, rebuilt crankshaft, all bearings and seals replaced, new alloy tank. £4500 Lincolnshire, tel:07970933626

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HONDA CB400
1981, 29800 miles, Ongoing project which still needs work to complete, bike is in bits, including engine, needs rebuilding and paint on wheels and bodywork. Too many new parts to list. £1050 Caerphilly, tel:07890331904

LAMBRETTA SX
1967, 384 miles, In White with Ruby Red side panels, fully frame up restoration with a rebuilt TV200 engine, 384 miles only since the restoration, previous owner 55 years, this is concourse, mint condition, perfect. £10000 West Midlands, tel:0759342385

MOTO GUZZI 125
1975, Running, new tyres, inner tubes, easy project. £1600 West Yorkshire, tel:01484663007

SUN CYCLONE
1955, Sun Hornet Motorcycle, lovely little bike, 98cc Villiers 4F 2 stroke, 2 speed, has been well restored, original registration number and registration card document, current V5 in my name. £1850 Staffordshire, tel:07877536948

DOUGLAS DRAGONFLY
1957, Has had a replacement engine, good starter, low mileage, please call. £3500 Uk, tel:07557792131

HONDA CB450
1972, 18700 miles, Lovely Steve McQueen type Honda CB450K5. Bought a few years ago to turn into a show winner but didn't have time. Now need the space. A lovely bike that needs a good home. £3250 Surrey, tel:07786070239

LAMBRETTA SX
1967, Previous owner for 55 years, total restoration to concourse condition then stored in man cave for 10 years, now recommissioned, perfect and mint condition, any inspection welcomed. £12000 Uk, tel:07593424385

NORTON COMMANDO
1972, Matching numbers, 8 leading shoe front brake. Needs work as been stored, 2 owners from new with V5C. £2750 Gloucestershire, tel:07971631685

SUZUKI 50
1976, 9044 miles, In Blue, very good original condition, starts and runs well, a fantastic example, brought into the UK by a collector in 2018 from Japan and never used, looks like new. £4900 Bristol, tel:07968710710

DUCATI 900SS MHR
1980, 22600 miles, Family owned since new, recent overhaul including carburettors, new chrome throughout, new exhausts and conti silencers, new tyres, excellent condition, original paintwork, injury forces sale. £15900 Bolton, tel:07947648198

HONDA XL200
1985, 10000 miles, Used regularly, Italian import, new Hagon shock, tyres. £1950 Uk, tel:07855508303

LAVERDA JOTA
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RALEIGH RUNABOUT
1964, Raleigh Runabout in running order. £1200 Bridlington, tel:07816561852

SUZUKI DR250S
1982, 6500 miles, Trail bike version of the DR, nice tidy example of an eighties trail bike, registered as historic, many new parts and work completed, please call for further details. £1950 Somerset, tel:07469705732

GREEVES SCOTTISH
1960, Rebuilt, in excellent condition, had virtually no use since undergoing a rebuild during which everything has been replaced or rebuilt, fine example of this marque and model, delivery may be possible. £4500 Essex , tel:07715175419

HONDA XR200R
1982, Rare XR200R, V5C in my name, great condition, new chain, sprockets, mudguards, seat cover, indicators fitted, tank cover, no tax/MoT, great green lane bike. £3250 Somerset, tel:07999862667

MATCHLESS G5
1963, In good running order, dry stored for 2 years but not concourse, now fitted with indicators, charging point for solid state battery, sale includes battery charger, ask for Tom, OVNO. £2000 Uk, tel:01733311193

RALEIGH WISP
1967, Raleigh Wisp, barn find, 1967, comes with tank and side panel so all complete but obviously needs restoring. £850 West Yorkshire, tel:07734001989

SUZUKI GS1000E
1980, This is a very nice original example of a GS1000E, with original exhausts. The bike has just had extensive recommission 1,700 including a new clutch. It is smooth and quiet with a very powerful engine. It comes fully serviced with a three month warranty (T). £7250 Kent, tel: 01959 444441

HARLEY DAVIDSON WLC
1942, In excellent restored condition, rebuilt engine by Damien Eggs. Very original with good history, rare reverse gear, reducing collection. £20500 Middlessex, tel:07798866071

JAMES CADET
1961, AMC engine 150cc, starts and runs, nice looking bike, needs a little DIY to improve, new battery, V5, all paperwork. £1200 Lincolnshire, tel:07922696390

MATCHLESS G80C
1953, 5969 miles, Matchless G80C 1953. Runs but needs a bit of TLC, been stored for 30+ years. No dynamo. £4195 Cambridge, tel:07710753366

SACHS LEOPARD
1975, 5000 miles, Sachs moped, not leopard, 1970s, good original condition easy starter, everything works, rare bike, no documents , £575 Devon, tel:07775618803

SUZUKI GS550
1978, Nice condition, well maintained, easy starter, sweet engine. Paint, chrome, tyres all good, new battery. £18000 Cornwall, tel:01637871618

HONDA 125
1982, 15000 miles, Good original condition, tax/MoT exempt, same owner for many years, nice example. £1595 Devon, tel:07775618803

KAWASAKI KH125
1975, 706 miles, Kawasaki KH100 - 1975 N Reg. 706 miles. MoT and Tax exempt. Runner. Good condition. Rare. Great restoration project. Further information contact Dave Carshalton, SM1, 07739 800478. £2750 Surrey, tel:07958342129

MATCHLESS G80S
1954, Fully rebuilt since 2020 as back street fun machine with no lighting, stack of bills, rebuilt later forks with new stanchions, new liner high comp piston, L/H oil tank, inline filter, reluctant sale. £3400 Northants, tel:07792346895

SCOTT 600CC
1929, Water cooled twin 2 stroke, road registered, rebuilt in early 90's, electronic ignition. £8500 Uk, tel:07855508303

SUZUKI GS650GZ KATANA
1982, This is probably the best 650 Katana you can find anywhere ! It is a UK bike has done less only 9,000 miles from new, and looks , rides and runs like a brand new bike. If you want a beautiful, useable and rare katana, you simply will not find better, It comes fully serviced with a three month warranty. (T) £7750 Kent, tel: 01959 444441

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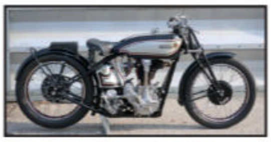
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1958, 79 miles, 200cc split single 2 stroke. 4 speed manual. Matching numbers, fully restored, only 79 miles. V5 and original reg, ONO. £3650 Worcester, tel:07943229942

VELOCETTE VENOM

1961, Near concours condition, Akront alloy, alloy tank, MK2 concentric carb, side stand, 12V transistor regulator conversions, indicators fitted. Owned by me for 14 years and enjoyed regularly. £5800 Hants, tel:01794513899

VELOCETTE VENOM

1960, 21500 miles, 1960 Velocette Venom, in good condition been dry stored for 10 years but lubricated and engine regularly turned over by the elderly retired marine engineer. Has been started and run ready for sale. , £3900 Pembrokeshire, tel:01646685714

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1957, Excellent condition, refurbished a few years ago, little use since. New parts, electronic ignition, box of spares. This is the one, grab yourself a fishtail. £5150 Hants, tel:07946214494

VELOCETTE VIPER

1960, 15000 miles, Clubman Spec, 15000 miles, matching numbers, original condition, much history, V600 Dodkin engine, first kick starter, CR gearbox, spirited ride. Few owners, 12 volt, Datatag, loved. £6995 Clacton, tel:07762007400

YAMAHA 80

1973, 10200 miles, Immaculate, original, well loved bike, the best you will find, has the original dealer stickers on it, 2 owners from new, runs great, all original handbooks and V5, starts first kick. £1495 Lancs, tel:07908623649

YAMAHA V-MAX

1985, 23000 miles, MoT March 26, full power, Canadian import, Supertrapp exhausts, V5C in my name, just had oil and filter etc, will become historic, MoT and tax exempt next year. May take P/X. £3250 Norfolk, tel:07969510071

YAMAHA XT

1988, 26800 miles, Imported from Germany, registered in the UK since 1997. V5 in my name. 26,800 miles. Sold as a project, engine not seized up. , £1750 Surrey, tel:07947577026

YAMAHA YB100

1980, 4900 miles, Original Gambier Reeks number plate, runs and rides great, totally original with great patina, original toolkit, one previous owner. £2200 Sunbury On Thames, tel:07774141804

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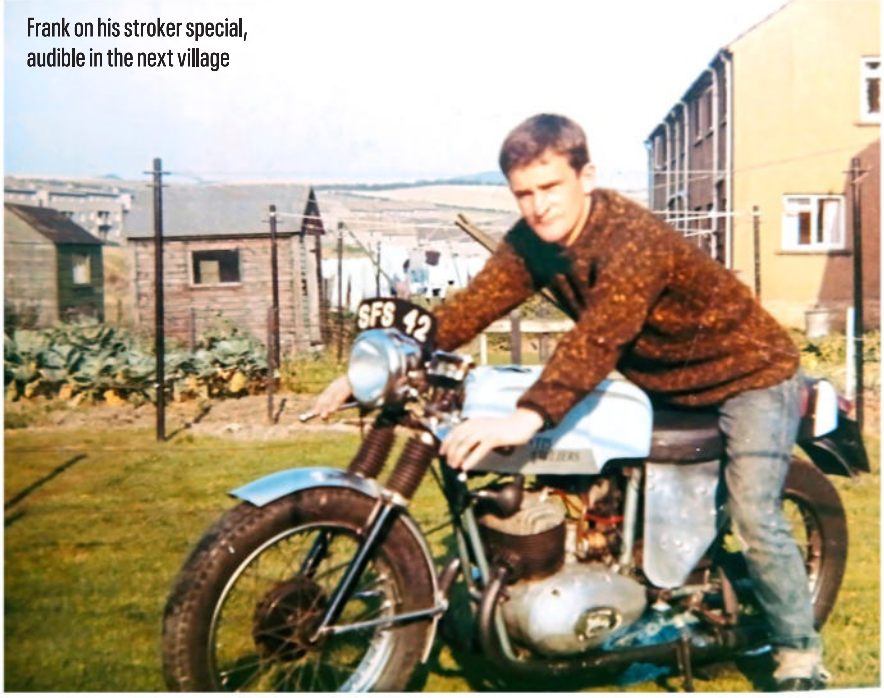
Special times

I created this two-stroke special whilst I was an apprentice in the mid-'60s – it was a Villiers 2T engine in a modified frame from a Tiger Cub with a blown engine. I fitted twin downtubes to take the engine from a Drayton Albatross scooter. I applied my very limited tuning knowledge, and with Bantam expansion chambers made to racing dimensions it went very well. It still had the Tiger Cub brakes front and rear, which if I remember correctly led to a few scary moments.

Because it had a bit of a powerband, I used to ride it flat out most of the time. Apparently, you could hear it from the next village. Building it was a great experience – and a great learning curve, as I'm still building the odd special to this day. I sold the bike when I went in to the Merchant Navy and sadly never heard of it again.

Frank Mccafferty, Oakley, Fife


Frank on his stroker special, audible in the next village

FRANK MCCAFFERTY

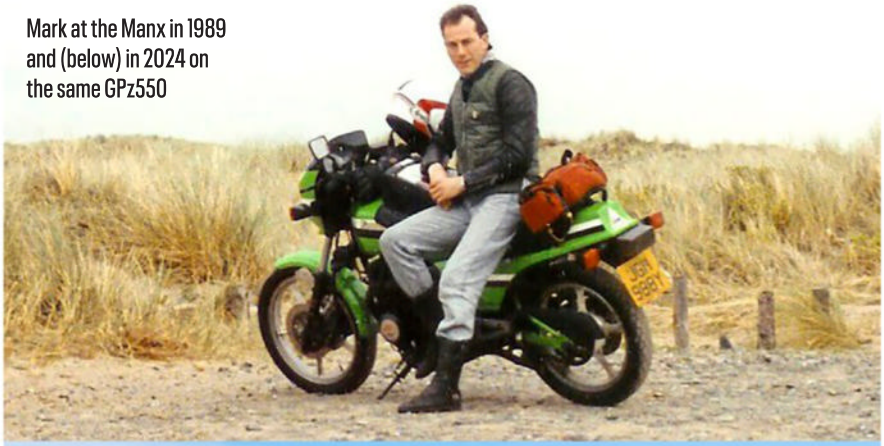
Double take

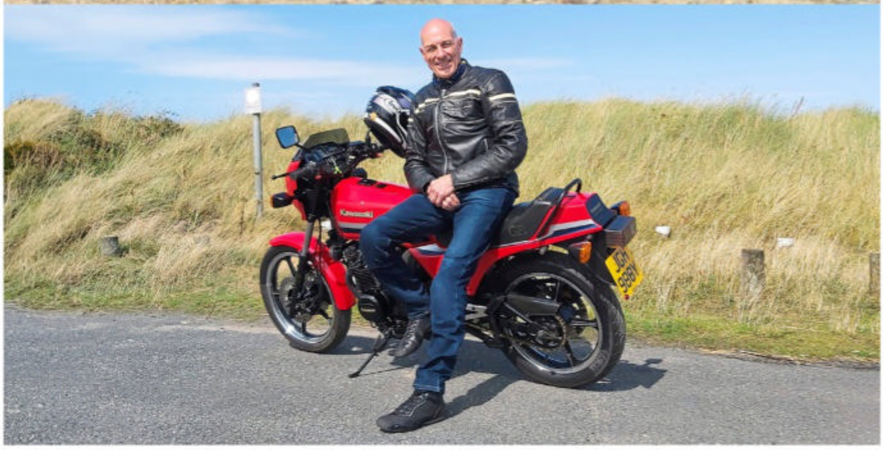
This is me on my Kawasaki GPz550 at the 1989 Manx GP. It was my first visit to the Island – a mate was racing in the Newcomers, so I went along to help out. I fell in love with the place and have been back to nearly every MGP/Classic TT since. I had bought my GPz550 brand new in 1982 from Townsend Motorcycles in Wallington, Surrey – it was the hot middleweight of its day and I loved it.

After accumulating six points on my licence, I went club racing on the GPz in '85, although I had to run in the 1300 proddie class. I raced for the next 20 years on various bikes, had loads on fun and a few offs, but kept the GPz for road use.

I resprayed the GPz in '88 in a Lawson-esqe scheme, but had to park it up in 1995 after missing a gearchange and bending the valves. It sat in the garage until 2022, when I dragged it out for a nut-and-bolt rebuild with a few period mods. I took my old GPz back to the MGP in 2024 and recreated the original 1989 photo – apart from having a bit more hair back then, nothing much has changed!

Mark Wateridge





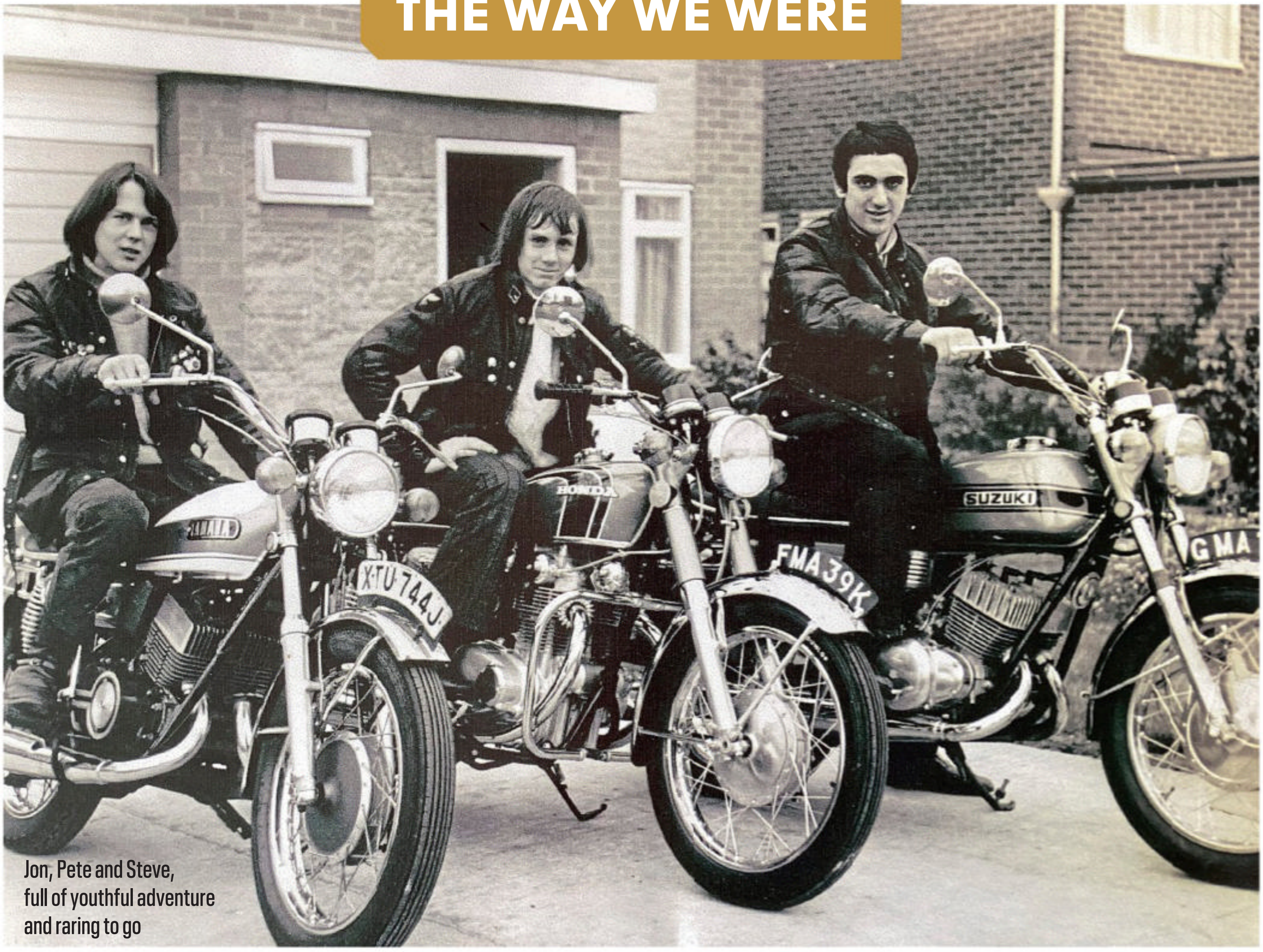
Mark at the Manx in 1989 and (below) in 2024 on the same GPz550

MARK WATERIDGE

SHOW US YOUR PHOTOS

Got a photo from back in the day of you showing off your bike? Tell us the story behind it... who you are with, when and where it was taken, and - most importantly - what are your memories of the bike(s) pictured? Share it with CB readers by sending a decent-quality scanned image by email to the address: **classic.bike@bauermedia.co.uk**

JON ROBINSON



Jon, Pete and Steve, full of youthful adventure and raring to go

All set for John O'Groats

Back in the '70s, a trio of teenagers could ride their bikes the length of mainland Britain for charity without anyone batting an eyelid. How times have changed...

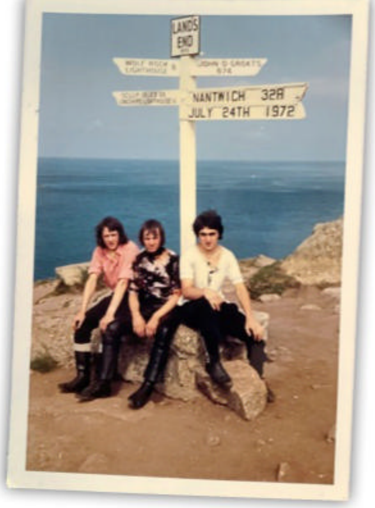
This picture was taken in 1972 for the local paper, as we were getting ready to do a Land's End to John O'Groats run for the Red Cross charity. It shows us on our 250s: myself (18) on the Yamaha YDS7, Pete Moran (19) on the Honda CB250 and Steve Williams (17) on the Suzuki T250.

We set off from Nantwich, Cheshire, rode down to Land's End and spent three or four nights camping and enjoying the warm, sunny weather and the Cornish pasties. After that, we set off towards Bristol to pick up the M5 where it started in those days. We then rode up to Sandbach on the M6 to met Pete's parents for refreshment, then continued up to Carlisle where the motorway ended.

The final stage of the journey was a ride through the night, picking petrol up at a late-night petrol pump in Inverness and arriving at John O'Groats the next day.

We did the 833-mile ride in 21hrs 31mins, setting a new record – although it was an unofficial one, as it wasn't recognised by the *Guinness Book of Records*. After a nap in a café, we headed back south – and on the way down to Inverness, I fell off my bike going around a hairpin bend, probably due to extreme tiredness.

Pete told the local paper: 'Motorcyclists get plenty of criticism, so perhaps our effort will help to set the record straight'.



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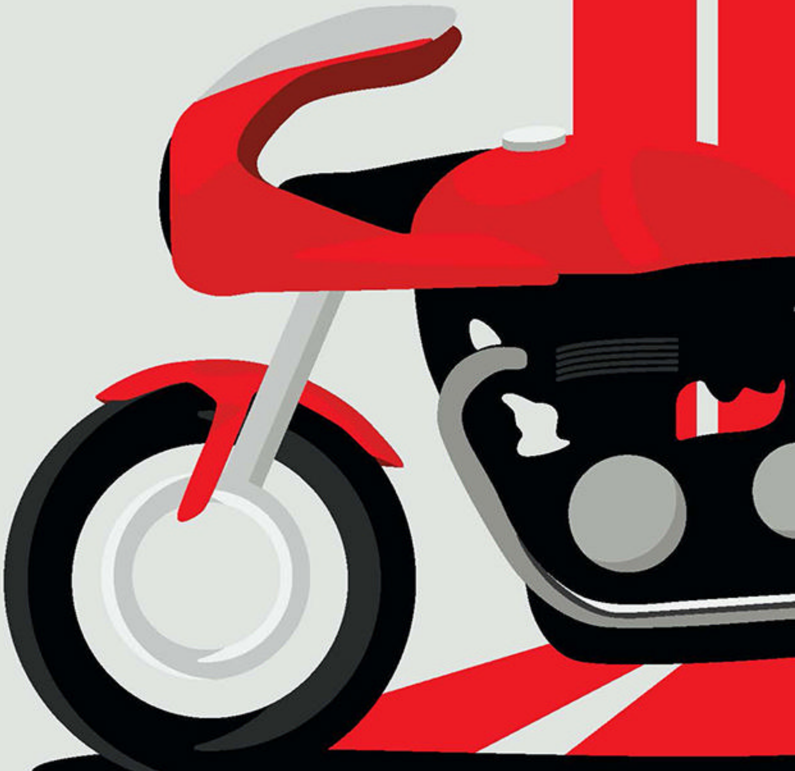

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